Buckle at the Bolshoi

Dance and Dancers

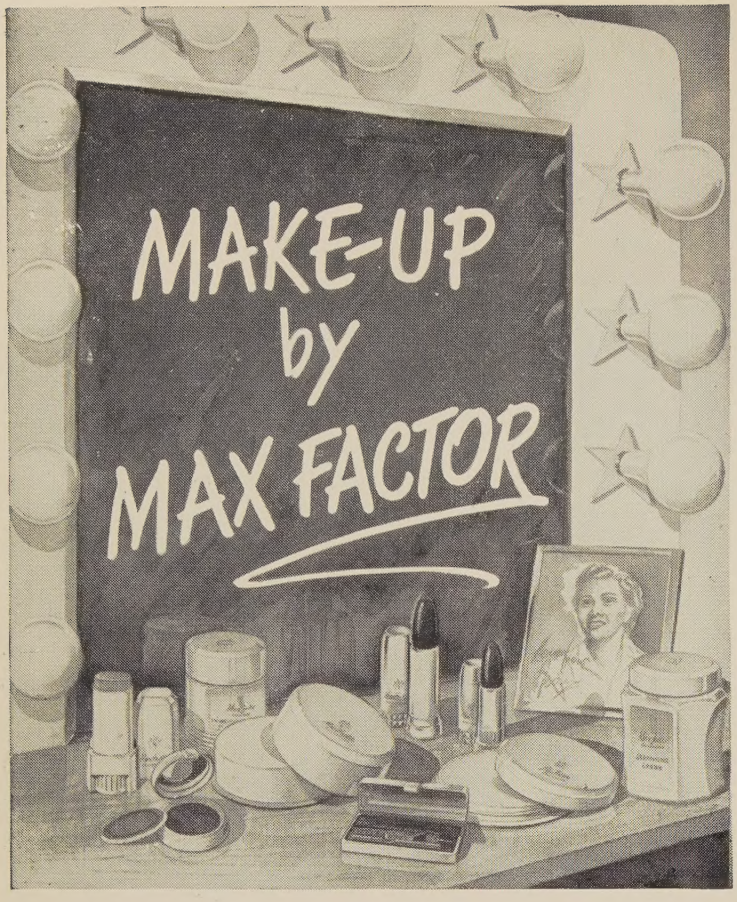
DECEMBER 1956

This month's full ballet guide

2s

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA

of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, in John Cranko's *The Prince of the Pagodas*



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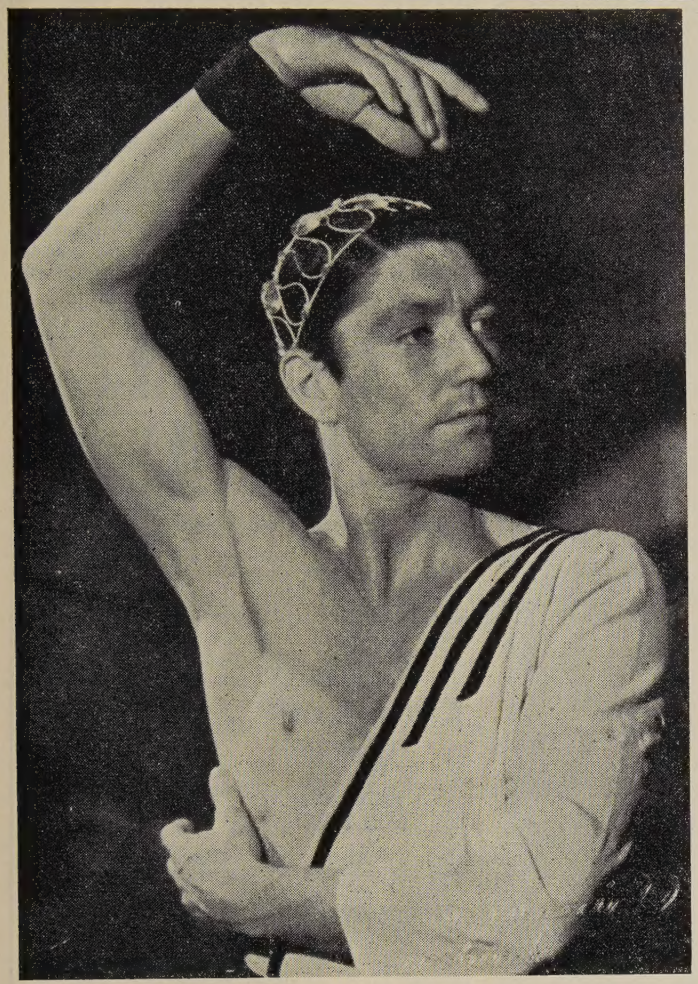

IN SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS: *David Blair in the rôle which Michael Somes created, the central figure of the three male dancers, in Frederick Ashton's ballet to César Franck music. Photo: Vivienne*

David Blair

WE know, of course, that in many ways the dancer of the year (this or practically any other) was really Ulanova—but this yearly citation we want to reserve for the dancer who has in some respect dominated the British ballet scene throughout the year. And this year we have no hesitation in plumping for David Blair.

In times past not only the quality but even the very existence of the British male dancer has been questioned. There was the odd phenomenon, the Dolin, the Turner, the Somes, but these swallows never made a summer. There were individuals but hardly a generation. Now as you know, as we know and as Dame Ninette has joyfully gone into print as knowing—British ballet has male dancers just like anyone else.

Yet needless to say there are still individuals, the plateau of competence has its peaks just as did the valley of despair. This year the spotlight has been turned full on David Blair, a young dancer still in his early twenties and recently given full *premier danseur* status at Covent Garden.

Blair has it in him to become the first dancer of genius ever to be entirely produced by the Sadler's Wells organisation. To the heaven-sent gifts of intelligence, musicality, technical aptitude and good physique he has added the commonplace virtue of hard work. After being a principal dancer with the Theatre Ballet, and an idol of the ballet public, while still in his teens, he started in the Covent Garden *corps de ballet* and worked his way up through sheer merit.

He still has a long way to go, but now shows every possible indication of going it. Already a place could be claimed for him among the first half-dozen of Western male classical dancers, and he is only in the springtime of his career. It should be a good summer.

December 1956 7th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 7 No. 12

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS
Assistant Editor: CLIVE A. BARNES
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

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After the party

THE mile-long ticket queues have become a memory, the spivs have turned their attention to other fertile fields in their pursuit of selling black-market tickets, the Bolshoi Ballet has returned to its native heath. We, who experienced the elation and occasional rare disappointment of the company's London season, are left to ponder on how we can benefit from what we have seen.

Although we saw but half of the company on a stage half the size of the one on which it is accustomed to dance, the great company from Moscow is no longer a myth.

Did those who control the destiny of ballet's future in the West really absorb all those facets of contemporary Russian ballet which can enrich immeasurably our approach to the art and its presentation in the theatre? Time alone will show, but already there is a feeling of gratitude, inspiration and new awareness among our teachers, dancers and producers.

The Bolshoi dancers brought an open-hearted strength and confidence to all their work. The glorious flow and breadth of their dance emanated from the spine and flowed through their bodies to the extremities of their limbs. It will be of little use for our dancers simply to copy the external elements of this approach to dance; it is something that has to be developed within themselves.

Their whole attitude must become less prim and pert, they must loosen up. They may also have been conscious of the great musicality of the Russian dancers, of how every note of the music was "felt" and how their bodies reacted like a Geiger-counter. Although some dancers are fated to remain unmusical all their lives, the greater majority can still have musical sensibility instilled into them; we have had proof enough that this side of the dance has too often been neglected in the teaching of our dancers.

Another important lesson to be learned was from the tremendous integrity the Bolshoi dancers brought to their work. They gave the impression of believing implicitly in everything they did. Everybody, down to the least important member of the *corps de ballet*, reacted convincingly to whatever was happening on the stage. There was none of our hand-on-hip standing about looking bored and detached. The loving care taken to achieve this must have been immense—but oh, how worthwhile it was!

In addition to dancers, ballet directors, teachers and audiences, those who write on the art of ballet now have a standard by which to set their sights in their future assessment of theatrical dancing. It was the Diaghilev ballet which in the past established our standards; now young writers can take the best from both worlds and judge the dance of tomorrow accordingly.

The Editor and Staff send greetings for a happy Christmas and peaceful New Year to our readers everywhere.

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Buckle at the Bolshoi

RICHARD BUCKLE was for many years ballet critic for the *Observer* and (before it stopped publication) editor of his own magazine, *Ballet*. He directed the fabulous Diaghilev Exhibition in Edinburgh and London in 1954, and has also written several authoritative books on the ballet.

Last month, in DANCE AND DANCERS, he wrote about the first two ballets—*Romeo and Juliet* and *Le Lac des Cygnes*—given by the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet at Covent Garden. This month he gives his impressions of the other two ballets—*The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* and *Giselle*—at Covent Garden, the television performance of *Swan Lake* Act II and the concert performance at Croydon.

THE FOUNTAIN OF BAKHCHISARAI

Tues. Oct. 9

AFTER the first act we were all very excited and went around saying: "Well, wasn't that something?" or "This is the genuine thing," or just "I say!" Only English Opera Groupers assembled at the smart end of the bar (the end nearest to Aldeburgh) sounded a discordant note—excuse my metaphor—in reminding us how commonplace the music of Asafiev was. It was, too—it sounded as if it were written in the 1880's by someone who got around very little even then. But the action and dancing had been so surging that I had hardly noticed this.

The scene of the first act of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* is laid in the garden of a Polish country house, at night. A party is in progress and the illuminated lattice windows of the house shine through the trees. Maria and Waclaw make love in the garden. Candelabra are carried out, and the guests, in national costume, dance the Polonaise, Mazurka and Cracovienne. The lovers do a romantic *pas de deux*. Then a wounded nobleman staggers in. The castle is surrounded by the Tartar hordes of Khan Girei. These soon invade the stage, and a scene of slaughter takes place. The house is burnt. Waclaw is slain and Maria becomes the Khan's prisoner.

This act gave the Russians a chance to show some of their best qualities. The Polish character dances were done with a dignity and attack which were invigorating. Struchkova was much better as Maria than she had been as Juliet. She looked lovely and danced like a dream. Her partner, Yuri Kondratov, a strong little man, was a fine dancer too. Their *pas de deux* had some exciting moments and culminated in his holding her with one arm fully outstretched above his head. The infiltration of lithe and evil Tartars was most alarming. The battle raged magnificently. The house burned well, Alexander Lapauri, as the Khan, appearing just before the curtain fell to claim the captive Maria, made a powerful impression of virility and barbaric might. We did not realise the ballet was over.

I happened to be sitting next to Danilova and Frederic Franklin. The ballerina agreed with me that Struchkova was a lovely dancer, but said that, in common with others of the Bolshoi company, she lacked that distinction of style which came from giving every movement its full value. I said I thought the modern Russians, fearful of formalism, which they called decadent, had perhaps deliberately evolved this new "natural" style which blurred the choreographic outline, and made for a greater emotional impact. Danilova said she thought they had simply lost the true style of classical ballet. She added that these were, of course, Moscow dancers; she herself had come from Leningrad.

TRIBUTE FROM THE WELLS: Galina Ulanova in her dressing-room at Covent Garden, dressed in her Juliet costume, sitting under the laurel wreath sent her by the Sadler's Wells Ballet.

Photo: C. Sanderson

Pushkin's poem about *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* may be perfect, but as a subject for ballet it presents difficulties. Waclaw can no longer go on being the hero after his death in Act 1, so Khan Girei becomes the hero. (Actually he is the main point of the poem—an animal being regenerated by love.) Maria goes on being the heroine, but she will have nothing to do with Girei, and dies unkissed. The two threads of the story, therefore, are never knotted. Maria mourns her way to a virgin grave. Girei, unrequited, lives on and mourns by the fountain, which is Maria's monument. The libretto is unsatisfactory; the music is insipid; the dancing is incidental.

Act II is a milk-and-water *Scheherazade* number. Quite a cheerful set, as harems go, with the usual lazy good-for-nothing women, a dangerous-looking favourite wife and some waddling eunuchs. Girei returns with his trophies, including Maria. But she, clasping her lute, scorns the murderer of Waclaw. He is in despair: love has got him badly. Zarema, the former favourite, tries to divert his attention with an erotic dance. This is a psychological mistake. The Khan is suddenly overwhelmed with boredom at his genteelly shimmying women and the music of B. Asafiev. And so are we.

At this point the intervals grow longer than the acts.

The scene of Act III is Maria's bedroom: it is blue tiled, and the walls are decorated with texts from the Koran, which Maria cannot read. Maria plays her lute, the Khan comes in and makes love to her; she rejects him. A maid comes in and goes to sleep on the floor. Zarema comes in and makes a scene: she murders Maria. The Khan, who has come

BALLET IN MOSCOW TODAY

by Hélène Bellew

The only full account of the fabulous Bolshoi, by Kirsova, famous ballerina and choreographer — the first Western ballet specialist to be allowed behind the scenes of the Bolshoi. This book contains critical appreciations of the leading dancers and of the Bolshoi School, the stories of all ballets in the repertoire, and 165 action photographs. Absorbing. Important.

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back in time to witness this, desists from knifing Zarema, as he thinks she will like it, coming from him. All that can be said about this act is that Struchkova died beautifully, clinging and falling round a column. Lapauri's miming as Girei is powerful enough almost to make one forget the unsatisfactory nature of the scenario.

Nothing really happens in Act IV in the way of action, except for Zarema being pushed over the battlements. Nobody misses her. Khan Girei sits on his throne, bored and miserable, and that is all. The act contains, however, some warrior dances, which the choreographer Zakharov has arranged after the style of Fokine's *Prince Igor*, though they are not nearly so varied and thrilling. These are done with frenzy by I. Peregudov and the wonderful Russian *corps de ballet*, who would undoubtedly have been even more wonderful on a bigger stage, such as they are used to at home. Alas! these dances seem irrelevant dramatically—their only point being that the Khan should look bored through them. And the fact that he looked bored had a depressing effect on us.

There is a simple epilogue in which Girei leans mourning beside the Fountain of Bakhchisarai, and the spirit of Maria appears to him. This is somewhat of an anti-climax.

I do not think Diaghilev would ever have countenanced so ineffectual a collaboration between librettist, composer and choreographer as resulted in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. The company still seems glorious, but one would like to give their artistic directors a shake.

GISELLE

Sat. & Mon. Oct. 13 & 15

GISELLE was the first ballet I ever saw, and I have always had a passion for it. And since that fateful matinée at Sadler's Wells in 1936 (exactly a century after the ballet's original production in Paris), when I fell victim to the elfin Markova—how many dancers have I seen in the great role! Danilova, Toumanova, Slavenska, Darsonval, Chauviré, Kaye, Hightower, Schanne, Fonteyn, Grey, Shearer, Gilmour, Goldwyn! I was born too late to have been taken to see Pavlova and Spessivtzeva, who were probably supreme, but for me Alicia Markova has always had a special quality which sets her apart. Now I have seen Galina Ulanova I can say that she, too, in quite a different way, is amazing and wonderful.

From the very beginning we saw that the Bolshoi Ballet's was going to be a superb production of *Giselle*; at the end I for one was sure it was the finest, taken as a whole, that I had seen.

The brisk beat of the admirable Yuri Faier (who I see has become a great favourite with Covent Garden audiences), the sunny autumn scenery of B. Volkov—surely better lit than that for our own *Giselle*—the entry of the elegant and admirable Fadeyechev, holding his cloak over his face, the natural acting of Erik Volodin as his Esquire, the handsome Hi arion of Lapauri—no longer a stagey villain, but a rough and sympathetic young forester who would clearly make Giselle an excellent husband—these had all impressed us favourably within a minute of the curtain's rising.

But everything about this first act was enchanting. I liked the jolly, sensible interpretation of Giselle's mother by Iraida Olenina, the gay and pretty Bathilde of Irina Makedonskaya, the bluff, imperious Duke of Radunsky, who was obviously standing no nonsense from anyone. The hunting party looked as if they had had a good day and enjoyed it, and I thought it was a sensible idea to carry on a dead stag to show what they had been up to.

The Russians, as it can well be imagined, threw themselves heart and soul into the peasant dances; and I was particularly struck by the way in which, during the *divertissement* they waved, cheered and encouraged the dancers. The *pas de deux*, longer than we know it, though similar in essentials, was delightfully danced by M. Gotlieb and Farmanyants. The latter's rolling leaps created a furore.

One of Ulanova's most extraordinary gifts is her faculty for showing on her face the play of different emotions. Her features like a landscape are shadowed by the passing clouds of thought. Sometimes her acting is so subtle, so cinematic, one might say, that I wondered if the finer shades of expression were legible in the gallery. One thing is certain, when she retires from dancing, she can make another career in the cinema. Because of this faculty of hers, Ulanova's Giselle is more a portrait in the round than any other interpretation by any other ballerina that I have seen.

I have never, I think, seen another dancer dare to risk giving at certain moments, a peasant gawkiness to Giselle's behaviour. I forget just when, but twice I saw Ulanova tuck in her chin and wag her head, grinning with the uneasy heartiness of a land-girl laughing off a compliment: " 'Ere! What d'you think I am?" As in Juliet, though, she paints all the shyness, doubts and delicate hesitations of first love. At times she conveys rapture. Her dancing is exquisite: her feet are as precise as pens, yet as light as feathers. There is a delicious exhilaration in her *petits battements* and her *pas ballonnés* are like a draft of mountain air. Is it her lightness that has made people put her in a special class with Pavlova and Spessivtzeva?

In the "mad scene" the sensitive sweep and lulls of the orchestra, the frantic rushes and sudden silences with which Ulanova suggests the breaking heart of Giselle, the active sympathy of the crowd and the noble desperation of Fadeyechev's transports as Albrecht combine to make a great work of theatrical art. If I have one criticism of Lavrovsky's loving revival it is that I should like Giselle's final fall to the ground to be more sensational.

In the second act Rimma Karelskaya made a fine Queen of the Wilis, but somewhat underplayed the sinister, cruel aspect of the character. The *corps de ballet* were impeccable, and once received a spontaneous round of applause in the *middle* of a movement—something I never remember happening before. This was when the lines of white-clad Wilis cross in and out of each other, hopping in *arabesque*. Their extended back legs, never wavering, remained marvellously extended throughout.

In his dance of exhaustion Nicolai Fadeyechev showed himself more than ever to be an artist of the first class. His carriage, his line, his perfect double turns in the air, his slow *pirouettes* and his proud, unhurried back *cabrioles* were a joy to see.

Ulanova, dancing divinely, enacted the spirit of Giselle, for the most part with downcast eyes, allowing eventually no other expression than one of godlike compassion to shine from her pale, sculptured face.

The Russian version has a few extra bars of music at the end to give Albrecht more time to register despair at losing his beloved once more. Fadeyechev, standing alone in the middle of the stage, facing the audience, made the most of this moment of tragic realisation.

I returned two days later to see Struchkova as Giselle. I thought she was very fine indeed. Her lovely heart-shaped Russian face, with dome-like eyelids reminiscent of Danilova, is beautifully expressive. She dances with the big, free movements, the amazing extensions and the carefree splendour of movement which we have come to love in the Russians. Her "mad scene" was most moving.

Other alternative castings provided fresh proof of the Bolshoi company's wealth of good artists. Taisia Monakhova as Giselle's mother, Vladimir Sevashev as Hilarion and Maya Samokhvalova as Queen of the Wilis were all good, though I thought the surly expression worn by the last named should be altered to one of glittering vengefulness. G. Yevdokimov in the *pas de deux* showed the same verve and *ballon* as Farmanyants, while appearing a little less sure of himself.

Day after day during the Russian season an inch or two of capital B's in the Personal Column of *The Times* has reiterated the eagerness of people to see this fabulous company and to pay highly for doing so. "Bolshoi Ballet. Two seats wanted for any performance. Will pay high price." Has there ever been a black market in theatre seats to this extent in London before? Alighting at the doors of the Royal Opera House one has become aware of a new and unfamiliar sound. Whole queues of people extending both ways round the block, clinking money in their hands. This is the accepted sign that they want to buy your tickets.

On October 15, as we entered the foyer, a tout offered us one ticket, and, finding we were early, my friend suggested going out again to ask how much he was wanting for it. The following conversation took place.

Friend: How much?

Tout: It's the last seat in the house. Eight quid.

Friend: Phew!

Buckle: Where is it?

Tout: What d'you mean, "Where is it?" I tell you, it's the last seat in the house.

Buckle: No one's going to give £8 without knowing where the seat is. It might be in the gallery.

Tout: Of course it's in the gallery.

Gallery seats for the Russian season were sold by the Royal Opera House box office at 7*s.* 6*d.*

It is sad that one cannot go every night to see these wonderful Russians—for wonderful they are, and worthy of their legend. I cannot but rejoice in the interest and enthusiasm they have aroused, and the passionate welcome they have been accorded. I have never heard such shouting in the Opera House as after Ulanova's Giselle or seen such cheering crowds as surrounded her car at the stage door. The Russians cannot be in any doubt that we love them. We mustn't let mere politicians keep us apart.

SWAN LAKE on T.V.

Sun. Oct. 21

THIS Sunday night at 10, BBC Television showed us extracts from the second act of *Swan Lake*, with Ulanova supported by Fadeyechev, and the Covent Garden orchestra conducted by Yuri Faier. Margaret Dale, the producer of this welcome and successful venture—herself remembered as an admirable demi-caractère dancer with Sadler's Wells—must be congratulated straight away on one thing. I have never, I think, seen so great a sense of space imparted to a television stage in a ballet programme. Some friends watching with me thought they were seeing a performance at Covent Garden. The angles were sensibly chosen. We saw the *corps de ballet* patterns from afar and from above and the ballerina's *adage* from close to and on the level—thus achieving the ideal which could only be realised in the theatre by swinging from balcony to stalls on ropes, or by the installation of a funicular railway.

I felt that viewers were longing for one real close-up of the ballerina's face—for she has become in a fortnight the most talked-off woman in Great Britain—but, artistically speaking, it was probably right that the Swan Queen should keep her distance.

How interesting it would be to see Ulanova and Fonteyn dance Odette one after the other! I wonder if Russians would find Fonteyn cold?

Ulanova, as we might expect, having come to know the aims of Soviet choreography, has banished much of the grand manner, which we consider an essential adjunct of these great classical ballets, from her style. The grand manner, we understand, implies a certain noble formality, aristocratic reserve combined with the openness of a royal gesture of acclamation, absolute control. The motto of the new Soviet manner might be "all for love, or the world well lost": that is to say that the Soviet dancers of today put abandon, emotion and passion, either tender or fierce, before everything else. They aim to *move* their public by the most direct means. In fact, Moscow ballet is enjoying a *Romantic movement*.

How does this show in the dancing of Galina Ulanova? The wonderful traditional schooling of Leningrad and Moscow shows in her feet and legs. She has beautiful placing, legs which open into bland extensions, exquisitely arched and sensitive feet. All her *steps* are executed in a manner as grand, as classical and noble—perhaps grander and nobler—than any we have seen. It is in the give of her spine and in the liquid flutterings of her arms, in the wild gestures of her hands—as unclassical and abandoned as those of a woman in the act of love—that this romanticism is revealed.

This applies also, of course, to the other female dancers of the Bolshoi Ballet.

We saw little or nothing of Ulanova's facial expression on the television screen, compared to what one sees from, say, the back of the stalls at Covent Garden. But I think she is more reserved as Odette than in other rôles.

I miss the huntsmen and even—though perhaps less—the assistance of Benno, the Prince's friend, in the *pas de deux*: these have no place in the Soviet version of *Swan Lake*.

Their six cygnets, though, are an improvement on our four, and behave less like ponies. And how much would I not give to see Ulanova and her wonderful colleagues dancing no matter what version of *Swan Lake* on the huge and sacred stage of the Bolshoi Theatre!

DIVERTISSEMENT
at the Davis Theatre
Croydon. Wed. Oct. 31

IT was very nice of the Russians to agree to give three performances of bits and pieces at the Davis Theatre, Croydon, but it cannot really have been much fun for them on the shallow stage of that huge converted cinema, and it wasn't much fun for us. I do not think I can remember any recital of this kind that I have really enjoyed.

The programme began well with the Polonaise and Cracovienne from *Ivan Susanin*, danced with pride and gaiety. Other character dances, mostly for a single couple, Roumanian, Moldavian, Georgian and Russian proved to be nothing very new or striking. Farmanyants performed a fine bounding solo from *Taras Bulba*, but Koren's "Spanish" dance I thought at first was meant to be funny, a skit on Dolin's *Bolero*. Yagudin did a Russian Davy Crockett number, which was childish in a "Bang-you're-dead" kind of way. If anyone else dresses up as peasants trying to be toys, jerking about the stage blinking their eyes, I shall scream.

Two Tchaikovsky numbers, *The Rose Adage* and the *pas de deux* from *Casse-Noisette*, were given in versions greatly inferior to those we are used to, and danced with a fearful lack of style and classical feeling. All the glamour and suspense of Aurora's ordeal with her four cavaliers, which always seems to me beautifully symbolic of every girl making her début and facing life and love for the first time, was banished from Petipa's dance and lost. The only attractive part of the Russian arrangement was the way the men kept flinging themselves impulsively at Aurora's feet. Karelskaya's flapping hands destroyed every illusion of nobility and grandeur. The same may be said of the somewhat unmusical Chistova's, who danced the Sugar Plum Fairy, awkwardly supported by the brilliant Khokhlov.

Spring Water was an *art nouveau* adagio act of stunning vulgarity danced by Bogomolova and Vlasov to Rachmaninov, which brought down the house. The Moskovski *Waltz*, remembered all too well from a performance at the Albert Hall some years ago, was much the same sort of thing, with white flannel trousers instead of spangled jock-strap, and with poor Struchkova hurling herself through the air upside down into the sturdy arms of a Lapauri, who looked quite commonplace with his own hair-style and no beard. Ulanova's *Dying Swan*—a silly thing for her to want to do—was not very good—not a patch on Markova's.

Much the best dance was a romantic *pas de deux* to music of Gluck (choreographer unnamed), done with subtlety, poetry and restraint by Kondratieva and Fadeyechev. This was the nearest the indefatigable Russians got to art during the whole long evening, but not for want of trying.

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CHOREOGRAPHY BY KEITH LESTER — CONDUCTOR LEIGHTON LUCAS

IGNORING the depressing recital at Croydon, how to sum up this triumphant season of the Bolshoi in London? Of the four ballets seen all contained something remarkable. After its fine first act *The Fountain* was a disappointment. *Romeo and Juliet* was excellent of its kind if, unlike me, you like that kind of pantomime ballet and can sit out its length. *Swan Lake* was inferior in many ways to our production. *Giselle* was greatly superior, in fact almost perfect. Ulanova is a great dancer. Yuri Faier is a great ballet conductor. The Bolshoi Ballet, as dancers and actors, is a great company.

It is time, however, that a breath of fresh air was let into the Soviet hot-house. The artistic direction of the company seem to live in ignorance of all the revolutions in art which have taken place in our century, many of which were initiated or publicised by Diaghilev. The directors, choreographers and *régisseurs* of the Bolshoi Theatre should take a sabbatical year off and see the world. They should ask Balanchine and Ashton to create, Stravinsky, Copland and Britten to compose, Tchelitchev and Picasso to design some new short ballets for them. What fun to write and produce a ballet for that company! I would go like a shot if they asked me.

NEXT MONTH: NINA LATTA, who was Ulanova's interpreter and constant companion during the Bolshoi Ballet's London season, will discuss the personality of the great ballerina. ANTON DOLIN who was a prominent member of the first Russian Ballet—the Diaghilev Ballet—to visit Europe, writes controversially comparing the dancers of that time with the Russian dancers of today. EVAN SENIOR, who has been to Moscow, writes about the differences between the London and Moscow productions of the Bolshoi Ballet.

FLOWERS TO ULANOVA: Gerald Beadle, Director of BBC Television, presenting Galina Ulanova with a bouquet after the television performance of Swan Lake. *Photo: Paul Wilson*

What the Press said about THE BOLSHOI

THE majority of critics attempted to describe the excitement of this unforgettable season for readers who were not present. Apart from the more serious weekly papers and journals, most of which made an effort to record and review the performances accurately, many of the comments will be of little value in, say, 10 or 20 years time to balletomanes who want to consult present-day critics for their opinions on this historic season. In fact, many of the criticisms will appear extremely bewildering and, if comparisons are made, contradictory.

Some distinguished names headed the articles: in the *Sunday Times* Alexandra Danilova and Sacheverell Sitwell, and even J. B. Priestley in *Reynolds News*. I was hoping that E. M. Forster might be prevailed upon to write something again. Perhaps the most interesting comments came from Danilova, J. H. Monahan in the *Manchester Guardian*, A. V. Coton in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Spectator*, and Annabel Farjeon in the *New Statesman*. Some of our longer established critics let us down rather badly. With his usual factual reviews, Cyril Beaumont, the critic of the *Sunday Times*, approached the season as if the occasion was of no more interest than a revival of a ballet by, for example, the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet.

The points on which the critics agree can be listed summarily. They liked Ulanova most in *Giselle* and adjectives of praise were not spared: a favourite expression was that she has the art which conceals art. They were impressed by the all-round strength of the ballerinas and female soloists, and by the *corps de ballet*, particularly the work of the *corps* in the second act of *Giselle*. They liked the male character dancers, and they approved of the strengthening of Rothbart's part in *Swan Lake* and the similar logical building up of Hilarion's rôle in the plot of Giselle. Yuri Faier's conducting received an extraordinary amount of praise, the older character-part dancers went to their hearts, and they were enormously impressed by the handling of the crowd scenes and sword fights in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Most of all, they disliked Asafiev's score for *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. There was also unanimity on the weakness of the classical choreography, and opinions on the costumes and sets varied from "hideous" to "old-fashioned." As many critics disliked as liked the physiques and style of the heavier male classical dancers, while many also found (poor things) that they could not accept the Russian *port de bras* and line.

One point which emerged rather forcibly was that, on the whole, the larger the circulation of the newspaper, the worse informed the critic—that is, if the paper employed a special ballet critic.

Some of the general opinions given outside specific reviews are interesting.

In *Reynolds News* J. B. Priestley informed us that there is nothing wrong with ballet, which at best can offer us some very agreeable moments. The ballets he saw in Russia 11 years ago seemed rather old-fashioned, and as a cultural achievement they appeared to him to be far below the productions of the Moscow Art Theatre.

Danilova in the *Sunday Times* said that to state that Ulanova is the greatest dancer we have ever seen is to ignore the achievements of Pavlova, Karsavina and Fonteyn, and reminded us that such comparisons are as futile as the "Bach is *better* than Beethoven" type of argument. She sadly arrived at the conclusion that Russian ballet has been in a coma for 30 years, and anticipated that the impact of the Sadler's Wells Ballet in Moscow would be tremendous, even though "the Russians may pretend not to understand some of the works." In the same paper, Sacheverell Sitwell said that he thought that we have some lessons of our own which will not be lost on Moscow—even "if there is still much for us to learn from the Bolshoi Ballet."

The *Daily Worker* gave us the following information: "The ideas that Soviet ballet puts across are simple ideas that attract the ordinary man in the street; ideas that life can be made better and happier. . . ."

A. V. Coton was impressed by the almost Stanislavsky approach of the Russian dancer to a rôle, so that he *becomes* the character for the duration of the performance. Coton regretted that in English companies this feature of "total characterisation is not found consistently and continuously illuminating the work of every dancer on the stage."

Coton in the *Spectator* was against judging the Bolshoi by our own standards. He put to one side all idealistic views about art being international, reaching the verdict that: "There is not more than one square foot of common ground shared by Soviet and non-Soviet companies today." While he admits that it is almost impossible to avoid comparing Soviet dance with the dancing of other nationalities, he declared that such comparisons must largely be invalid. This is because "every single factor . . . that conditions a dancer's work, private life, degree of involvement, artistic sensitivity, is completely different between a Soviet and non-Soviet dancer." He went on to make the following penetrating observation: "Where in our world a number of the highest professional dancers give constant evidence that they are wholly committed, fully dedicated . . . and nothing else, the Bolshoi appears to be staffed entirely by men and women who exist only to be dancers."

Press comment on individual ballets will be found on pages 15, 17 and 21.

BOLSHOI BALLETS

Le Lac des Cygnes

First given at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, on February 20, 1877, with music by Tchaikovsky, choreography by Julius Reisinger. Revised at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, in 1895, with choreography by Lev Ivanov and Marius Petipa.

First given by the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on October 8, 1956. Choreography for Acts I, II and III by A. Gorsky, for Act IV by A. Messerer. Revival staged by A. Messerer and A. Radunsky. Designed by S. Versaladze.

CAST

Odette, Odile	NINA TIMOFEYEVA
Prince Siegfried	NICOLAI FADEYECHEV
Evil Genius	VLADIMIR LEVASHEV
Jester	GEORGI FARMANYANTS
Sovereign Princess	ELENA ILIUSHCHENKO
Tutor	ALEXANDER RADUNSKY
Pas de Trois	M. KONDRATIEVA, L. CHADOREIN, B. KHOKHLOV
Three Swans	M. SAMOKHVALOVA R. KARELSKAYA, T. VETROVA

GIFTS FOR THE PRINCESS: Elena Iliushchenko, as the Sovereign Princess, receives flowers from the guests. Nicolai Fadeyechev, as Prince Siegfried, is on the left. A moment from the first act of the Bolshoi Ballet's Le Lac des Cygnes.

CHOREOGRAPHY

THE same Russians who have so scrupulously preserved *Giselle* have certainly played ducks and drakes with *Swan Lake*. The differing attitude towards both of these so-called classics is not incompatible. *Giselle* is from head to foot a period piece. *Swan Lake*, with its symphonic score and vivid dance imagery, lends itself to contemporary realisation. One can legitimately do to *Swan Lake* what would be death to *Giselle*, and the Russians have been happily doing it for 79 years.

One of the most significant productions was that by the Stanislavsky Ballet, devised by Bourmeister in 1953. Having seen this version earlier in the year, my own personal reaction to the Bolshoi production was one of definite disappointment. Even though this initial impression was subsequently amended, there is no doubt that the Stanislavsky version was far more interesting and stimulating than the Bolshoi.

The Sadler's Wells version is based on the Petipa-Ivanov choreography, first performed on January 15, 1895. This was not, of course, the original *Swan Lake*, which had earlier been seen in two completely different versions by Wenzel Reisinger (1877) and Olaf Hansen (1880). The present Bolshoi production owes something to the Petipa-Ivanov "original," although neither choreographer is accredited on the programme, which attributes the choreography to Alexander Gorsky and Asaf Messerer.

Gorsky first produced *Swan Lake* in 1901, and before his death in 1924 he had undertaken at least five major revisions of the ballet. Perhaps the most important of these were the versions of 1920 and 1922. The 1920 production, which was given with the collaboration of Stanislavsky's co-director of the Moscow Art Theatre, Nemerovitch-Danchenko, was the first to introduce the character of the Jester. In 1922, when Asaf Messerer danced Siegfried, a lot of the conventional mime was discarded for more direct gesture. Subsequently, Messerer, himself, completely re-choreographed the last act, giving the ballet a happy, realistic ending, a conclusion at one time accepted by Gorsky but discarded in both his 1920 and 1922 productions.

These productions were all in Moscow, yet throughout the Soviet Union modified versions of the ballet were produced with either gay abandon or searching desperation. In Leningrad the old Ivanov-Petipa choreography held the stage until 1933, when the famous teacher Agrippina Vaganova produced the notorious neo-realist version, which made Rothbart a penniless Duke and shifted the emphasis from mysticism to the mistier regions of psychology. Vaganova's production was also aimed at restoring much of the actual Ivanov choreography that had by then been lost, but it was first modified and later replaced by a version by Fedor Lopukhov. Later Konstantin Sergeyev reproduced the ballet, including in its structure Gorsky's Jester.

The startling Bourmeister production, given in 1953 by the "experimental" company attached to the Stanislavsky and Nemerovitch-Danchenko Theatre, attracted world-wide interest. It aimed at giving the ballet according to Tchaikovsky's original intentions, and restored the second act to the Ivanov choreography, while largely re-choreographing the remainder of the ballet. As this production has already been discussed at length in DANCE AND DANCERS (both in an article by Ulanova and in the review of the company's recent Paris season), I do not propose to dwell on it here.

However, the then current Bolshoi production was apparently compared unfavourably with the Bourmeister, and the production seen in London is freshly revised (1956) by Messerer and Alexander Radunsky. Before the company's visit I understood that this revision was to adopt many of the features of the Stanislavsky version, but this hope has proved unjustified. Not having seen the previous production it is impossible to say what has been changed, but the only apparent debt to Bourmeister seems to be the half-hearted attempt to include the Spanish dance in Rothbart's entourage. This failure to recognise the importance of Bourmeister's innovations is, I suggest, the Bolshoi company's loss.

The differences between the Bolshoi and Sadler's Wells productions are most marked, both in mood and actual presentation. The Russian emphasis is on the fairytale narrative, the British emphasis is on Romantic mysticism. Both are quite valid, although fundamentally opposing views, of the same work. I suspect our dancers see *Swan Lake* as something midway between *Giselle* and *Les Sylphides*; the Russians are in no doubt that the ballet's nearest next of kin is *The Sleeping Beauty*.

What is it that Gorsky has done to the first three acts? He has introduced the Jester, a cheerful Russian figure, who links the Prince with the Court. He has eliminated—and it is really no great loss—the nebulous Benno. The peasants on the other hand have also been cut out of the first act, for no apparent reason. The classical mime has been reduced (perhaps by Messerer) to barest essentials. In theory this is excellent, in practice I found the first act episode between the Queen-Mother and Siegfried unintelligible.

The second act retains Ivanov's vision of the Swan-Princess, and the famous *adagio* for Odette and Siegfried, together with Odette's *Variation*, have been retained in more or less their original form.

The *corps de ballet* work has been considerably amended, and made more classical than romantic in feeling in a way that reminded me at times of Balanchine's production. I greatly regret these changes because the original Ivanov not only has considerable intrinsic value but is also of unique historical importance. One must draw a distinction (and I felt this with the overwhelming Bourmeister version and the often magnificent neo-classicism of Balanchine's production) between giving a work of art a contemporary awareness and tampering with its essential structure. The Russians regard ballet, rightly, as a major art like music. Do they, one wonders, jazz up Mozart to make it palatable to modern audiences?

All credit to someone for removing the illogical Huntsmen from this act, and for having Siegfried on stage during Odette's solo. The making of Rothbart into a dancing rôle adds to the drama without disturbing too much the original ballet—and this I liked.

The ballroom scene is different choreographically from ours, and includes a first-rate

pseudo-Spanish dance. I would prefer the prospective brides to be given more individual character, but in my experience only Mary Skeaping's Stockholm production has solved this problem. I greatly approve of Odile's delayed entrance, which is also similar to that in Stockholm. The English habit of allowing Siegfried and Odile to run off together at the beginning of the act is as unlikely as it is presumably immoral.

The Russians have a charming dance at the beginning of the act for the Jester and some unidentified national dancers. This is, I believe, normally the Dwarf Dance used in a number of productions, including the Bourmeister. The Venetian dance is quite rightly made Neapolitan, but given in an insipid choreographic version.

The last act is by Messerer, the choreography being not that unlike Massine's symphonic period. Parts of it are impressive, including that to the *variation* omitted from most versions and called, I think, *The Swan's Last Song*. I cannot help thinking, however, that Messerer has lost the mood of the ballet. Some of his choreography has a modern "plasticity" more like Lifar's *La Mort du Cygne* than Ivanov.

The ballet ends with a realistic fight between Siegfried and Rothbart, the latter dying when one of his wings is wrenched off. After his writhing, mortal agonies, the dawn breaks and the Swans are disenchanted. So was I.

This happy ending, now general in Russia, is cheap and conventional. A happy ending is justified by Ulanova on the grounds "not only because it corresponds more to our view of the world, but because the very music of the finale, although choral, is written in a major key." The second reason is nonsense, the first has more force, although I cannot accept any view of the world that insists *exclusively* on material happiness. One wonders how Ulanova, using her own arguments, would produce the last act of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. To an extent I admit the happy-ever-after ending does find its own justification in the fairytale atmosphere of the production. But I remain repentant and unmoved.

REJECTED APPLICANTS: The six prospective brides whom the Prince rejects in favour of Odile. At Covent Garden there was a slight alteration to this set for Act III—the throne was moved to the right and the main entrance, with steps, was placed centre back.

PRINCE IN THE AIR: Nicolai Fadeyechev in his variation in Act III. He was generally considered to be outstanding among the many wonderful Bolshoi male dancers.

In general one might say that the Bolshoi production moves at a more gentle pace than the British. While I have no doubt that we are closer to the letter of Petipa-Ivanov, the naturally superior qualities of the Russian style (and I am not denigrating our dancers who in 25 years have worked a miracle) gives one an uneasy feeling that in some ways the Bolshoi is probably closer to the spirit of the old Russian ballet-masters. Bearing this in mind I would still claim that in theoretical understanding and historical awareness the old-fashioned Sadler's Wells version has qualities which I would not exchange for the Bolshoi production. By which I mean that even if we could dance this essentially Russian ballet as well as the Russians themselves, it would be our own *Swan Lake* I would want us to dance.

Clive Barnes

DANCING

IT was a cause for regret that circumstances prevented the Bolshoi company from showing one of their famous prima-ballerinas as Odette-Odile. Both Nina Timofeyeva and Rimma Karelskaya, who danced the rôle at Covent Garden, are immensely promising but neither, at this stage of her development, is a world-beater.

Timofeyeva, with her scintillating technique, was more an Odile than Odette. Her fluid style should have been equally well suited to the second act, but her performance seemed cold, as though lacking in inner justification.

Karelskaya, whom I greatly preferred, was all fire and ice in the part. Her movements were big and grand, even her curtain-calls had the authentic touch. Her Odette was passionate, while her Odile had a sweet seductiveness that was positively evil. When during the *pas de deux* this Odile imitates Odette's movements, she sent a shiver of excitement down my spine.

Timofeyeva was partnered by the elegant, reserved Nicolai Fadeyechev. Perhaps his characterisation as Siegfried does not yet project as well as his Albrecht, but he has nearly everything else one could wish for and danced a variation as polished as marble. Yuri Kondratov has obviously done the State some service, and is still soundly competent (his partnering, even in this company, was wonderful), but his dancing was disappointing.

Space does not permit detailed discussion of the other rôles. There were many cast changes, among them some that were less than excellent, but the overwhelming impression at all performances was one of supreme accomplishment. The *corps de ballet*, not drilled, just musical, was a consistent joy to watch, and the character dancing, by the women as much as by the men, had all the zip and bite we associate with the name Russian ballet.

Clive Barnes

MUSIC

UNLIKE the Stanislavsky Theatre production of *Swan Lake*, recently presented in Paris, which apparently aims at restoring the sequence and complete content of the music as Tchaikovsky originally conceived it, the present Bolshoi revival allows us to hear the "traditionally correct" arrangement of the score, as rehashed by Petipa for the 1895 Maryinsky production, 14 months after Tchaikovsky's death.

For his reworking of the Petipa-Ivanov choreography, Gorsky seems to have taken the score currently in use at the time completely on trust, so that, at least from a musical point of view, there were only small differences between the Bolshoi and our own Sadler's Wells versions of the ballet, amounting to a few odds and ends of unfamiliar material.

In the first mime-scene *pas de deux* of Odette and Siegfried (No. 10 in the piano reduction) 69 bars that are always cut in Western productions provide music for Odette's encounter with von Rothbart. Otherwise the music for the first two acts is virtually identical with what we use.

Whereas at the beginning of Act III the Wells make a cut, if I remember rightly, of several pages, the Russians make a far grander thing out of the dance of courtiers and guests by

RETURN TO THE LAKE: The pas de deux *before von Rothbart's castle in the final act of the Bolshoi's most recent production of* Le Lac des Cygnes.

playing the whole of the music and with all repeats observed—and by dancing it as they do. Then comes a dance for the Jester and six masked couples, to music omitted in the Wells production, though Sergueeff's staging of the ballet for International Ballet included a similar dance of masks at this point, but without a jester. There is also a short but exciting coda to the Mazurka, while the Black Swan *pas de deux* is exactly as we have it, except that the Drigo polka for the Prince's solo is played in a different and inferior orchestration from the one we know.

The only additional music in the last act is an *andante con moto*, originally intended for part of a *pas de six* in the third act, but here interpolated as a *pas de deux* for Odette and Siegfried at the end of the opening *andante* section of the finale. Though dramatically effective, this unfortunately interferes with the symphonic sweep and continuity of the musical design of these last magnificent pages.

Much as one must regret the loss of the greater part of the Petipa-Ivanov choreography, there is no denying that, in eliminating much that was merely fussily pretty or quaint and replacing it with bigger, broader movement, Gorsky has come nearer at many points to the spirit of the music. Consider, for instance, the wonderful strength and fluency of his handling of the *corps* in the second act, the breath taking panache of the new dance for three swans to the music which in our productions, with good reason, has become known as the "Cow Hop." Certainly, as presented at Covent Garden, Gorsky's choreography and Messerer's for the last act achieves a unity of style lacking in the well-known version with its occasional reminders of the old French school.

The controversial happy ending is, I feel, a great mistake. Together with the unpleasant death agonies of von Rothbart, not only does this drag the whole thing down to a plane of realism that makes nonsense of the theme's underlying symbolism, but because the transformation is banal and lacking in epic grandeur, the old criticism that Tchaikovsky's music is too "symphonic" to be danced is, for once, curiously made to seem justified.

But whatever one might think of the production, there is no denying that the enthralling orchestral performance under Yuri Faier gave us the full measure of the music's splendour and depth, while the phenomenal musicality of the dancers was something to marvel at. It must surely be pretty obvious by now to even the most fanatical Anglophiles that in many respects to talk of an English "school" of classical dancing has amounted to making a virtue of deficiencies; and that the best thing we could do at this stage would be to beseech the Russians to send us some teachers. After all, no misguided sense of national pride prevented them, when their ballet was a mere hundred years old, from enriching its basis with an infusion of Italian virtuosity.

David Hunt

DECOR

AFTER the production by the Stanislavsky Ballet from Moscow, which was seen last summer in Paris, the effort by the bigger company—the Bolshoi—came as a disappointment. Not that the costumes in either case would do much to set this lake on fire, while the sets could hardly be called more than adequate, but the younger company's whole production, with its exciting effects, made *Le Lac des Cygnes* take on an aura it has not previously achieved in the West.

The great point of the Bolshoi's sets is that they never intrude for a moment—they just impart the right atmosphere. In this respect their opening scene is superior to any I have seen before. It has a grey autumnal melancholy. The castle, rather too whimsily perched for my liking, is seen through an avenue of trees whose branches seem bowed in memory of departed summer. It is soft and sorrowful and the right environment for the last open-air party of the season—a fitting prelude for the tragedy to follow.

Intelligent lighting gave these arboreal wings and borders no hard edges—intelligent lighting or the fact that they may have been painted on several layers of very thin canvas. The Russians have also raised the height of the proscenium opening; that masking border, which makes our Wells ballets look squat, has been dispensed with. Good riddance! Let us hope it will never return, because there is no possible reason why it should.

The costumes for this alfresco rout are autumnal too—in browns and greys, though what period they are supposed to be I just wouldn't know, as several centuries contribute to their silhouette. I thought it a pity that such virile men are hampered by unflattering make-up and shaggy wigs. One always imagined, according to the original story, that the Prince's friends were of a slightly unsavoury character, which was why his mother insisted on his immediate and honourable marriage. I don't think any mother would object to this lot, so genteel are they in breeding and behaviour. There may be a subtle Russian reason for this change which has so far escaped me.

It was certainly pretty dim by the lake *that* night. The near shore of Act II was hardly visible, while the distant one was so high up the back-cloth that only the front rows of the stalls could have realised that the swans were not at the seaside. However, this lighting had one advantage in that it gave greater depth to the stage, as the back rows of swans could barely be discerned. This was certainly an improvement on the arterial road floodlighting which so unbecomingly illuminates this act as a rule. There was no doubt that this rocky ravine with its suggestion of trees was designed originally for a very much broader stage than that of Covent Garden.

The group of swans that crossed the lake at the opening and closing of this act was more impressionistic than the usual shooting-gallery line of birds which tends to make the audience titter. When it comes to human swans, I find that I am now completely won over to the short tutus for the *corps*; they make a less dowdy lot of birds and they reveal the beauty of the dance.

The ballroom, in Act III, is hung with silver and black tapestries of a rather post-war design. The lack of colour and fussy detail would have made a good background for brilliant costumes. Alas, these we were denied. The Tarantella ladies would have been better as Giselle's Wilis, the Mazurka and Czardas groups were more suited to 'twenties Ruritania, while a group of people with orange and black jumpers belonged nowhere in particular—possibly they were friends of the jester! The big hit of this royal cabaret was the Spanish quartet in grey and black, which was very clever of them: they had probably benefited by observing the sartorial taste of their fellow performers who had appeared previously. Until Leslie Hurry's most recent revision of this act for the Sadler's Wells Ballet, I don't think that in the West we have had much to be proud of in the way this ballroom has been designed. So, people who live in glass houses . . . !

One great accomplishment that the Russians have is that whatever they wear they really *wear* as though they lived in them. All those ladies and gentlemen of the court move or stand about with natural elegance. Many such people in our companies look as though they were in unaccustomed and exceedingly uncomfortable fancy dress.

The final act was similar to Act II except that we had arrived in the vicinity of von Rothbart's castle, which closely resembled a disused Cornish tin mine; this building collapsed unconvincingly with the death of the magician. Perhaps I had been spoiled by the Wagnerian scenic climax of the Stanislavsky production; in comparison the Bolshoi ending seemed exceedingly tame. There is a strong possibility that some day soon this company will take on the many startling innovations of the junior company.

Peter Williams

SOME PRESS COMMENTS

A GREAT number of critics who felt that *Romeo and Juliet* contained too little actual dancing was looking forward to *Swan Lake* so that they could judge the strength of the company's dancers. While most were more than satisfied with the standard of dancing, *Swan Lake* proved to be the least popular production.

Alexander Bland in the *Observer* felt that it provided a "very dusty answer" to two questions: have the heirs to the Russian tradition retained some magic which we have lost, and would their dancing prove hopelessly superior to ours? His assessment of the production as a whole was that it was lacking in dramatic impact and that the new bits of choreography were rather banal.

In the *Manchester Guardian*, J. H. Monahan declared that he felt when it was first announced that Sadler's Wells were to take their version to Moscow, the decision seemed both rash and impertinent. "But," he said, "it does not seem like that now." On the bigger stage of the Bolshoi he imagined that the Russian production would probably have points to recommend it which have inevitably dwindled or disappeared in the reduced version which is all that the Covent Garden stage can accommodate. It seemed "faded, jejune, unimaginative, as though Russian producers, having lived with this work for more than half a century, had no longer a new thought or new touch to bestow on it." "Time and time again, the British version has the more imaginative and tasteful choreography and the prettier (if equally conventional) scenery and costumes."

The *Daily Herald* thought that in some respects our own Sadler's Wells version compared favourably with the Bolshoi's. *The Times* referred to the standard of dancing as opulent and passionate by Sadler's Wells standards, and decided that "it was a lively and enthralling, however controversial, version of a masterpiece."

For Arnold Haskell in the *Daily Mail* the most striking point was "the change in the Russian classical style from the golden days of Pavlova and Karsavina. Gone is the beautiful carriage of the arm. In its place there is an excessive movement prolonging itself to the wrists which seem fussy."

In a preview in the *Daily Express*, John Barber warned us that even this famous company from Moscow had two works in its repertoire—"*Swan Lake* and *Giselle*—of pure French design." The same newspaper was later pleased that some boos were mixed with the applause to give its review a good headline. Barber was most impressed by Fadeyechev whom he described as "a noble hunk of a prince."

Coton in the *Telegraph* felt that the ballet seemed rather slower paced than other versions, and that more of the story's impact was carried through the actual dancing. Jack Cox in the *Daily Worker* declared that "the artistry of Gorsky's choreography, which though strange to the version that London knows, was a brilliant refutation of the charge that creative ideas left Russia along with Diaghilev and Fokine."

The *Evening News* critic thought that the dancers were superb even when they merely walked across the stage. "Their technique," he wrote, "is not involved, still less acrobatic. It is simple dancing, perfectly executed."

Annabel Farjeon in the *Statesman* was the only writer who attempted to define the physical reasons for the technical differences between the Sadler's Wells and Bolshoi companies. In a brilliant review she wrote of the Bolshoi: "They do not dance prettily with the somewhat doll-like finesse that our artists affect. Each step is enacted with vitality and decision, so there is never a vague motion, nor, owing to the spinal control, any trembling movement when *en pointe*." But she hoped that one day the Bolshoi will re-learn what is still known of the original version. "That production," she concluded, "will certainly be worth queueing for."

The Fountain of Bakhchisarai

First given at the Kirovsky Theatre, Leningrad, on September 28, 1934. Libretto by N. Volkov after a poem by Pushkin. Choreography by R. Zakharov. Music by B. Asafiev. Designed by V. Khodasevich.

First given at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, on June 11, 1936.

First given in London by the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on October 9, 1956.

CAST

Maria	RAISSA STRUCHKOVA
Zarema	VELTA VILTSIN
Waclaw	YURI KONDRATOV
Girei	ALEXANDER LAPAURI
Nuralli	GLEB YEVDOKIMOV
Maria's Father	ALEXANDER RADUNSKY
Youths	TRUSHKIN, VIRENKO
Old Men	SMOLTSOV, GOLISHEV
Second Wife	N. SIMONOVA
Chieftains	BORISOV, KRAMAREVSKY, YAGUDIN
Maria's Maid	I. OLENINA
Mazurka and Cracovienne Dancers	SANGOVITCH, SEKH
Dance with Bells	L. CHADAREIN

CHOREOGRAPHY

WHAT happened to ballet in Russia after the revolution? Fokine had gone, Pavlova, Karsavina and the older generation of Maryinsky ballerinas had gone. Nijinsky and Bolm had gone. The Imperial Ballet had become once and for all split into the ambulant Ballets Russes and Soviet Ballet. We have always known what happened to the Ballets Russes, now we are piecing together the story of Soviet Ballet.

The Russians had lost a lot, fortunately they had a lot to lose. Gorsky remained behind, they still retained the services of more brilliant dancers than Diaghilev could ever enrol, and the schools and teachers were still there safeguarding the future.

Yet the problems facing Soviet Ballet were not confined to a reduction in its material resources. On one level it had to align itself with the new ideological aesthetic concepts of the Soviet regime, and on the purely practical level it had to attract the attention of a completely different audience from that which supported the old Imperial Ballet.

It is important to bear this background in mind when looking at Rotislav Zakharov's *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. Created for the Leningrad company in 1934, it is regarded in Russia as a landmark in the history of Soviet Ballet. We may accept, perhaps, that for Russian eyes it succeeded in what it was trying to do far better than its predecessors, and are left with the question of the ballet's intention.

Ballet in Russia is regarded as a major art. Ulanova, in her writings, never allows us to doubt her belief in the universality of the art. It would not occur to her that ballet's artistic appeal to the emotions has any boundaries. The ideal of Soviet Ballet was to present humanity through humanity to humanity. For fulfilment of this ideal, like many ballet-masters before them, they frequently used themes drawn from great literature, Balzac, Shakespeare and, in this instance, Pushkin.

CAPTOR AND CAPTIVE: Khan Girei (Lapauri) brings Maria (Struchkova) to his harem. The harp she holds is her only reminder of her past life in Poland. An incident from Act II of The Fountain of Bakhchisarai.

In the previous act, set in the grounds of a Polish castle, the celebrations to mark the engagement of Maria to Waclaw are interrupted by the invading Tartars. The castle is burned, the guests murdered and Maria captured by Girei, the Tartar Khan, who carries her off to his harem in Bakhchisarai.

In *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* Zakharov seeks to realise Pushkin's conception (formalised by the critic Belinsky) of the regenerative power of love. The central character, Khan Girei, is ennobled by his hopeless love for the chaste Maria. This was Zakharov's first ballet, and it is not, by any means, so distinguished a work as Lavrovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. The theme is not clearly enough felt for the ballet to be a complete success. The fantastically rich first act and the last act, although perversely enough the most exciting as regards dancing, add little to the narrative. The characters undergo no profound psychological change—even Girei is the victim of a *coup de foudre* and as soon as he claps eyes on Maria his fate is sealed.

Zakharov has attempted to produce, to use in his own words, "dances arranged as monologues and dialogues, in which the actor speaks, not with the formal gestures of the "deaf and dumb," but with dance movement conveying the thoughts and feelings of the relationship between the characters."

To an extent he succeeds. Zarema's dances in the second act and the two famous "dialogues" in the third act are, for the observant spectator, remarkably articulate. Unfortunately they are also a little dull.

This dullness is partly due to the sugary poverty of Asafiev's second-rate "danceable" score, but also to the almost monosyllabic nature of Zakharov's "conversation." The part of Maria can be said to be moulded on a single dance figure—the *arabesque*. Girei is presented with the same stark simplicity, striding through the ballet with arms outstretched to embrace his empire. The seductive passion of Zarema, the cringing arrogance of Nuralli, the boldness of Waclaw are all caught in a phrase, the value of which is dulled by repetition.

Where Zakharov's choreography is at its best in the superbly composed mass dances. The entire first act, ending with a battle pitched as high as the heavens, is superlative. The dances of the Tartar warriors of the last act are given a savage dance-orchestration in which lines and masses are magnificently deployed. Here the Soviet choreographer reveals his kinship with good Father Petipa and the Prodigal Son, Fokine.

Zakharov tried to produce what he called a "choreographic poem," but what he has done in fact is to give us a spectacular four-reel cinematic-style epic. Yet we must be grateful and humble, for who else but the Russians could show us ballet in such heroic splendour.

However, from the little we have seen of Soviet choreography it appears that they have something to learn from the West. Not how to produce one-act ballets (any fool pressed by economic necessity can learn that), nor how to trick out puerile themes and rotten choreography with pretty *décors*, but the more inventive and even more expressive possibilities of certain Western choreography.

Unfortunately, because they already have the heart of the matter in their keeping they may not be able to recognise our virtues. They have much more than us, their whole approach to ballet is fundamentally healthier. They are old and we are young. But if only we could teach our wonderful ballet grandmother to suck just a few eggs, I think it might strengthen the old girl enormously.

Clive Barnes

DANCING

IN some ways *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* revealed the full strength of the company better than any other ballet in the London repertory. Not only was it, from a dance point of view, by far the most spectacular of the works presented, but it also called for dancing of almost every conceivable type. Dramatic, classical, character, mime, there was hardly any category of dance expression that did not find a place in Zakharov's ballet.

The opportunities it offers to the five principal characters are terrific—this is a dancer's ballet if ever there was one.

Raissa Struchkova is a very wonderful ballerina, and it was perhaps unfortunate that her great qualities tended to be over-shadowed by the presence and legend of Ulanova. In this ballet, however, her performance as Maria was not following in the wake of Ulanova, and it was possible to assess her interpretation freed from the moonshine of unfair comparison.

Strangely enough (or perhaps it is not so strange) Struchkova shares many of Ulanova's qualities, notably the gift they both have for complete absorption in a rôle. As Maria she presented a noble, warm-hearted woman, where the character could have been so easily made into an Ouida-like prig. In the first act the joy of her love for Waclaw was transmitted through the fresh upsurge of her dancing. The rôle was given an infinite variety of careful shading, her modesty, the tiny pangs of jealousy when her lover momentarily showed an interest in another woman, her pride and happiness, all found a place in the scheme of her portrayal. The terror she felt during the battle, and her trust in Waclaw were clearly delineated, and when after Waclaw's death Girei tears off her veil she achieved a transfixing moment of defiant beauty.

In the third act her nostalgia was made poignant instead of sentimental, and her spirit seemed completely untamed. Her death scene had all the grandeur of a Roman suicide and she died unvanquished.

Young Marina Kondratieva was also excellent in the part, dancing with youthful flourish but lacking Struchkova's heroic manner. Her situation appeared touching rather than tragic. Like most of the young dancers in this company her dancing is beautifully musical and fluent; she flows from one dance figure into the next with the thoughtless grace of an animal.

There is not much to Waclaw's part, as he dies gloriously but quickly. The experienced Yuri Kondratov partnered, acted and danced (in that order of distinction) with expert ease. He is a fine artist, but I preferred the youthful fire and vehemence of Boris Khokhlov in the rôle. He seemed so dashing and dauntless that every time his death came as a surprise.

The brooding stage presence of Lapauri spread itself over the ballet. His first entrance as the warrior Khan, ruthless and unstoppable, was unforgettable, while his melancholy nobility as the regenerated savage could not have been bettered. The other Girei, Vladimir Zakharov, was drawn to an altogether smaller scale.

Velta Viltsin, a Latvian dancer, improved steadily as Zarema as the season progressed. The profane counterpart to Maria's sacred love, her profanity was too petulant to be genuinely passionate, but she has a good dramatic temperament, and by her last performances was dancing really well.

For the benefit of certain newspapers and future historians, the Tartar dance in the last act is led by Nuralli and not by the mimed Captain of the Guard. The season saw three dancers in this sensational rôle, which makes the Chief Polovtsian Warrior seem as tame as a captive Bluebird. The most remarkable was Yagudin who jumps higher than a house (he also danced the Jester in *Romeo* with immense success), but the best-acted portrayal was probably Vladimir Levashev's. Gleb Yevdokimov combined most of the virtues of both performances, and added to it a madness of his own, which was presumably why he was chosen to dance it on the first night.

It would be impossible to leave *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* without mentioning the wonderful character dancing of the whole company. The final Tartar dance regularly stopped the show, but the first-act Mazurka and Cracovienne (led by Zvyagina and Rikhter or Sangovitch and Sekh) was equally impressive, as was the Sword Dance of the elegant Trushkin with Virenkov or Vasilyov. As was, indeed, the whole bag of tricks. **Clive Barnes**

MUSIC

IF Soviet critics can point with justifiable pride to Prokofiev's full-length ballets as the 20th-century equivalents of the great Tchaikovsky scores, perhaps privately they may admit that the 15 ballets of Honoured Artist and Order Bearer Boris Asafiev, though highly regarded officially, entitle him to be ranked, at a pinch, with such worthy 19th-century ballet composers as Minkus.

Ballet needs its hack-composers, if only to keep the wheels of the assembly line running smoothly for the occasional production of masterpieces by greater talents. For over 30 years Asafiev, who was born in St. Petersburg in 1884 and died in Moscow in 1949, seems admirably to have fulfilled this function, writing, in addition to a huge mass of operatic, symphonic and chamber music, eminently dance-worthy ballet scores, all apparently with a secure basis in folk music.

As music professor at the Leningrad Conservatory and, under the name of Igor Glebov, as musicologist and author of numerous books on music, including one on Stravinsky that would surely make interesting reading, Asafiev wielded enormous influence on Russian cultural life. To him must go a great deal of the credit or discredit, whichever way you look at it, for the modern Russian attitude that music, art and literature, far from being the prerogative of a cultured élite, should be readily assimilable by the "ordinary man."

His music for *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* has, I think, been somewhat unfairly criticised for not being something it makes no pretence at being. The ballet is surely intended to be regarded, not as a dramatic heavy-weight, but as a lyrically poetic exposition of the rather lofty theme of a savage softened by the regenerative power of love, and with room available for whimsy and even humour.

Lacking any distinctive style of his own, Asafiev seems to have sensibly put at his choreographer's service his expert facility for writing in the idioms of a wide variety of other composers. Thus to begin with there is a truly superb imitation *à la* Glinka of a Rossini overture. The first act, musically as well as choreographically by far the best, also owes practically everything to Glinka and to the Polish national dances of *Ivan Susanin* in particular.

The gay waltz at the start of the second act is strikingly reminiscent of the Spanish Dance from Glazunov's *Raymonda* and, together with the skittish behaviour of the energetic wives, also reminded me of the opening of *Graduation Ball*—where the dramatic situation is, when you come to think of it, not altogether dissimilar. This is no doubt thoroughly true to life, for the Russians must be presumed to know more about such things than we Westerners, who were taught by Diaghilev to take our harems much more seriously. But what would Fokine have thought of it all? After all it was he who "discovered" Asafiev for ballet, engaging him as pianist and ballet conductor at the Maryinsky.

Maria makes her entrance in the harem act to music that leaves little doubt that Asafiev was well acquainted with Fauré's *Dolly*; the dance with which the Second Wife attempts to capture the interest of Girei recalls, rather appropriately, Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy*;

FIRST WIFE DANCES: Zarema, Girei's favourite wife, dances for him. Girei is indifferent to her as he has fallen in love with Maria. In the next act the jealous Zarema stabs Maria. In the final act Zarema is pushed over the battlements and the grief-stricken Khan is left mourning for his lost Maria.

while Zarema tries to do the very same thing to a piece that sounded oddly like Prokofiev amusing himself with the *Pizzicato* from *Sylvia*.

Maria's harp solo in the third act—heard in the orchestra on the piano—as well as telling us that she was remembering the Waltz and Mazurka she had danced in the first act with Waclaw, also evoked echoes of Raymonda's lute stummings. The big Tartar dance in Act IV took over, of course, from where Borodin's Polovtsis left off. And so one could go on suggesting answers to Asafiev's "Guess the Composer" game. The saccharine sentimentality of the Prologue and Epilogue was a disastrous miscalculation.

Yet for all its weaknesses and thinly disguised borrowings, the score is exceedingly well put together and at all times makes an enjoyably tuneful, though insufficiently atmospheric, accompaniment to the dancing. After a couple of hearings I found that I was beginning to get quite attached to it.

David Hunt

DECOR

KHODASEVICH'S designs for *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* must, when the ballet was first done in Russia about 20 years ago, have been as typical of a trend as were, for instance, those of Leon Bakst in the early years of this century in the West. Soviet designing had been through many vagaries since the revolution. It had seen periods of Impressionism, Cubism and most of the "isms" except, possibly, Surrealism. It even started an "ism" of its own which was widely copied in the West —Constructivism (originated in the theatre by that great producer, Vsevolod Meierhold) penetrated the Diaghilev Ballet in *Le Pas d'Acier* and *La Chatte* and it can still be seen in many productions in Central Europe.

Soviet Russia had obviously tired of so many experimental forms and in the mid-'thirties the swing was back to the earlier school of realism. *The Fountain* was possibly a typical example of this swing. Since then, the Russians have mainly kept their ballet productions to this style. It is as well to remember this when considering the designing of the four productions which the Bolshoi Ballet showed us in London. What we saw largely represented the Soviet approach to designing over a period of something less than a decade. I remember seeing an exhibition of Soviet theatre design at the Dorland Hall in Regent Street before the war—pre-*Bakhchisarai*—and most of the work shown there was staggering in its invention and use of barbaric colour. Therefore to say that their productions have not progressed since Diaghilev left Russia is to reveal complete ignorance of the situation.

So when Ulanova said, as she did at a press conference, that Soviet ballet had been through the phases of so-called modern ballet, discarded them and returned to a more classical form, she was undoubtedly also referring to the designing of them as well.

Few spectacles on the stage could be more realistic than the four acts of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. The opening scene, the garden before the façade of a Polish castle, was not of great interest from a design point of view but it provided an admirable environment for beautiful and haughty Polish dances. It gave a tranquillity which made the invasion of Tartar hordes even more sinister and dramatic. The effect of the castle burning up before our eyes was splendidly contrived. A designer could hardly suggest the whole drama more positively, and with greater simplicity, than in the moment when the invading Khan Girei confronts the white and trembling Maria for the first time. As he kneels before her he flicks back his magnificent cloak—it is lined in blood red. An obvious trick you might say. Obvious perhaps but, oh, how effective!

I suppose every harem scene is for ever going to be compared with Bakst's *Scheherazade* because, after the romanticised harems of the last century, it was the first taste that the late Edwardians had of Oriental Mormon life. But anybody who has been in a harem in the Middle East will know that the second act of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* is about as near to the real thing as would be possible on the stage. To the Russians, such places are not exotic; they are as "everyday" as Piccadilly Circus is to us. In this second act I liked the high latticed windows, with a sultry yellow sky showing through, and the heavy drapes which formed the ceiling. Somehow it all created a listless atmosphere, accentuated by a bubbling fountain. I did not like the shiny sateen of the coats worn by the wives any more than did I care for the chartreuse beach-pyjamas of Zarema. Needless to say, the Tartar costumes were all well conceived and worn with conviction, particularly so the gold-embossed costume of Khan Girei, a magnificent creation.

Maria's chamber, in the third act, consisted entirely of turquoise mosaic. Although it was of immense proportions, it was so well lit that it never overpowered the four characters who are the only protagonists of this act. It was gloomy, opulent and overpowering and the production was so good that each of its three corners was used to the utmost.

The white-walled courtyard of the final act was conventional and obviously needed a larger stage to give it full impact. One also gathers that at the Bolshoi the view through the centre arch in the back wall gave a feeling of space and height—an effect unfortunately lost on the smaller proportions of the Covent Garden stage.

The fountain which gives the ballet its name was the only piece of scenery in the prologue and epilogue. Its simple design, which enabled water to drip from one bowl to another, was absolutely right.

Of its kind and period, with definite reservations as regards some of the costumes, Khodasevich has done a monumental designing job which can still hold its own with ballets created in the style and thought of today. It will certainly suffice until the ballet is finally dropped from the repertoire.

Peter Williams

PRESS COMMENT

THE TIMES correspondent thought that this work demonstrated how the company thrived on drama expressed in terms of physical movement. He regretted that Asafiev, who besides being a composer, was also a critic,

did not know that "for harem music Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov provide better models than Adolphe Adam or the weaker Tchaikovsky." Facially, at least, Struchkova reminded the writer of Danilova.

Alexander Bland wrote: "While the action is undeniably dated, with a strong Ethel M. Dell flavour, it almost always carries conviction, partly due to the hypnotic performance by Lapauri as the Tartar Chief." Haskell in a *Daily Mail* review, entitled "Bolshoi in an Oriental Bazaar," could not remember a worse score, choreography and décor, declaring: "Yet there are moments when the critic becomes a schoolboy who revels in the flames, fights and gushing fountains."

Coton in the *Daily Telegraph* though that the drama was unbalanced with "too much of minor interest occurring between the fine climactic moments. The ballet suffers from an excess of naturalism which is such a virtue in *Romeo and Juliet*." The *Daily Worker* felt that the choreographer had relied too much on the interpretative powers of the dancer.

The *Daily Express*, referring to the ballet as "half-circus, half-pantomime and the company's most gorgeous production," was clearly more interested in the fact that among the audience Mr. Liberace was for once not the centre of attraction. The most amusing comment of all came from the *Star*, which stated that the essential fact was that the ballet seems so old-fashioned because it dates from 1936.

Giselle

First given at the Théâtre de l'Academie Royale de Musique, Paris, on June 28, 1841. First given at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, on November 11, 1843.

First given by the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet in London at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on October 12, 1956. Libretto by Théophile Gautier, Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Jean Coralli. Choreography by Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot and Marius Petipa. Music by Adolphe Adam. Designed by B. Volkov. Production revised by L. Lavrovsky

CAST

Giselle	GALINA ULANOVA
Count Albert	NICOLAI FADEYECHEV
Duke	ALEXANDER RADUNSKY
Albert's Esquire	ERIK VOLODIN
Bathilde, Albert's fiancée	IRINA MAKEDONSKAYA
Forester	ALEXANDER LAPAURI
Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis	RIMMA KARELSKAYA
Two Wilis	N. FETISOVA, N. CHISTOVA
Giselle's Friends	V. MITRYAEVA, Z. KOROTAEVA, N. TABORKA, M. SMIRNOVA, L. IVANOVA, L. LITAVKINA
Pas de Deux	L. BOGOMOLOVA, G. YEVDOKIMOV

CHOREOGRAPHY

THE Bolshoi presentation of *Giselle* is very probably the most enthralling production seen in the London ballet theatre for well over 20 years. Why?

Choreographically the truly remarkable thing about this *Giselle* is its similarity to the versions danced in the West. It differs from the Sadler's Wells production hardly more than does Dolin's version for Festival Ballet.

Both the Western and Soviet versions stem from the same source, Petipa's production of October 8, 1860, but after 40 years of isolation naturally a few divergencies have appeared. But the incomparable quality of the Bolshoi *Giselle* does not result from any particular choreographic superiority, but rather from the dramatic coherence and validity of the ballet as a whole.

The Russians have tried to find out the meaning of *Giselle*. They have tried to expose the poetic truth embedded in its novellettish narrative.

In the West we take the plot of *Giselle* about as seriously as we take the plot of, say, Bellini's opera *Norma*. Both are accepted as offering wonderful technical and emotional opportunities for the *prima donna*. The Russians see *Giselle* as dance-drama, and with surprisingly few choreographic changes contrive to give their production a new and noble theme.

One of the dominant subjects of Russian literature—Pushkin gloried in it—is the regeneration of man by love. In their *Giselle*, together with the triumph of Giselle's love over death, is interwoven the story of Albrecht's salvation.

Consider Albrecht in our productions. Insincere and hysterical, a Romantic puppet manipulated by the clumsy strings of theatrical convention. How can the Western dancer impose a sense of character on Albrecht?

The Russians have conceived Albrecht as a real person, possibly the central figure of the ballet in just the same way as Girei is the protagonist of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. At first his feelings for Giselle are those of an insincere libertine. All his actions are shady and furtive, and his behaviour is sharply contrasted with the good but naive Hilarion. The production emphasises this contrast in many ways. The audience's sympathy for Hilarion is established at the outset by his bashful gift of a partridge which he leaves at Giselle's door. Significantly it is he, and not Albrecht, who wrests the sword from her hands as she is about to kill herself. Albrecht's

"HE LOVES ME, HE LOVES ME NOT": Giselle (Galina Ulanova) and Albrecht (Nicolai Fadeyechev) in Act I. Photo: Houston Rogers, by permission of Harmony Films Ltd.

THE BLOOM OF YOUTH: Though photographs give little idea of the unique qualities of Ulanova's Giselle, this picture captures something of the extraordinary youthfulness of her interpretation in Act I.

THE MAD SCENE: Galina Ulanova in a moment towards the end of Giselle, *Act I. Realising that she has been deceived by Albrecht, Giselle loses her reason and dies. The picture shows the moment before Giselle picks up the sword, and also gives a good idea of the fine setting designed by B. Volkov. Photo: Houston Rogers, by permission of Harmony Films.*

behaviour is shown up in its true colours—his dandified posturing and evasiveness, culminating in the villagers recoiling from him in horror after Giselle's death.

Together with these sharply defined portraits of the honest village lad and courtly seducer, comes a freshly considered reading of Giselle. No longer is she the fey, elfin creature, who might have stepped out of a play by Sir James Barrie; this Giselle is a strapping peasant girl.

Happy and sunny, with a sense of humour and the earth beneath her feet, there is nothing extraordinary about her—except her love for Albrecht. This is immense and raises her to heroic stature. Incidentally, despite her strapping appearance she has a weak heart, and this physical weakness provides her destiny.

Given these three characters the narrative moves of its own volition. The blundering love of Hilarion sets off the disaster. The shock of Giselle's death, the realisation of her love, twists Albrecht into manhood. The philandering boy falls in love with the dead Giselle, the emotions he has played with are jerked into reality.

The whole first act, for the first time in my experience, is thus made into an intelligible situation. I can understand this production as I might understand a novel.

The second act is a sequel to the first. Albrecht having felt love is made to understand its power. At the end of the ballet he is not hysterically throwing himself at Giselle's cold grave; instead he is by himself at time's still centre, holding the flowers of his dream. Giselle has saved him from himself.

That this is probably not Gautier's ballet worries me not at all; how many Shakespearean productions worth their salt remain completely true to Shakespeare's original thought? They retain Shakespeare's poetry and his conception, and this is what the Russians appear to have done with *Giselle*. The Romantic atmosphere is perfectly evoked, but the ballet has been given a contemporary significance.

Much thought and intelligence has gone into the ballet's details. Wilfred does *not* lead the hunting party to Giselle's cottage, but comes on at the same time from the opposite wing and is much perturbed lest Albrecht should appear. When Hilarion is killed by the Wilis some attempt is made to relate his manner of death with the ordeal of the dance of exhaustion that is soon to befall Albrecht.

So one could go on. Here we have the answer to all the problems that the old ballet has ever posed. Where to include the peasant *pas de deux*—which is here so devised as to make natural Giselle's own big variation that has previously so often seemed like an interpolation by a visiting ballerina. How to provide refreshment for the court party without giving the impression that Berthe keeps a tea-shop. How to integrate the mad scene into the first act as a whole. These and many other questions are definitively settled.

It is still not perfect. There are perhaps too many lilies in the second act, and the production does not make sufficient use of supernatural stage effects. But it was good enough for me.

Clive Barnes

DANCING

ULANOVA moves me nearly as much as life itself. After nearly 20 years of watching plays, films, opera, ballet and listening to music, I would say that her Giselle is the greatest performance by an interpretative artist within my experience. Her greatness lies not in what she does, but in what she is. Her dancing has lost the spring of youth, and one notices this fact with a sort of objective interest.

Her art defies description because the analysis of it detracts from its naturalness. As Giselle she showed every nuance of emotion—in her face, yes, but more than in her face, in her spirit. Everything the Russian critics have written about her is true. The impeccable technique, the expressive body, the intellect, the informed face—it is all true; yet somehow it could be equally true of a lesser artist. Ulanova has something that criticism could never define, something which perhaps you might look for in Shakespeare's Sonnets.

Yet it is not to a summer's day that people are comparing her. The air is buzzing with "Is she greater than Fonteyn?" "Is she better than Pavlova?" "Has she got the little bit that Taglioni missed?" "What has she got that Goody Twoshoes hasn't?" Who knows? Who cares? She is Ulanova.

Raissa Struchkova, the other Bolshoi Giselle, gave a beautiful and moving performance. For this production her first act was a little lacking in both humour and humanity; she has yet to get inside the part. The love she showed Albrecht was not sufficiently tremendous to justify madness, and the failure to get that across is in this production—where Giselle is *not* half-crazy to start with—fundamentally damaging.

The second act was far better. She really was a wraith only warmed into life by her love for Albrecht.

Both ballerinas were partnered by the young and comparatively unknown Nicolai Fadeyechev. He proved a superb Albrecht. An elegant and virile dancer, a naturally strong and attentive partner, and already an actor of distinction, Fadeyechev seems certain to achieve recognition as one of the great dancers of the next 20 years. The rôle of Albrecht calls for a very subtle characterisation, in which he was entirely successful.

The ensemble dancing of this company is infinitely better than anything we can offer in

the West. In the second act the girls were all —every single one of them—Wilis. They were not just girls dancing in a *ballet blanc*, they really were Wilis. More than anything else, this brought home to me how far our 25-year-old ballet has to travel before it can rival the dancing of the 200-year-old tradition of the Russians.

All the other rôles were completely filled. Lapauri and Vladimir Levashev both made splendid Hilarions. I preferred Maya Samokhvalova to Rimma Karelskaya as Myrtha, while the best of the various *pas de deux* casts were Gleb Yevdokimov, and a dancer, wrongly named as Kondratieva on the programme, who, I believe, was L. Chadorein. **Clive Barnes**

MUSIC

THE taste and integrity that distinguished the Bolshoi's production and dancing of *Giselle* extended also to the treatment of Adam's great and lovely score, for many years a favourite object for the abuse of superior persons who somehow delude themselves into thinking that the ballet won its immortality in spite of its music and not, as anyone with a pair of ears can hear for himself, largely because of it.

Every production of *Giselle* given in London since the war—and doubtless all others within living memory—has been danced to a considerably abbreviated version of the score. Certain of the larger cuts for which no choreography has survived have become standard, but there is an enormous number of others which vary from company to company, according to the whims of individual artistic directors and producers—and dancers.

What Lavrovsky's lovingly revised staging of the ballet allowed us to hear was not, as could scarcely have been expected, the whole of the score as Adam wrote it, but a virtually complete performance of the version on which all modern productions are based—that used for Petipa's 1887 production at the Maryinsky. It came as no surprise, then, that Giselle was allowed her well-known bravura solo in the first act and, as a Wili, her big flower-tossing variation, both Petipa interpolations to music which is certainly not Adam's but most probably by Minkus.

The male dancer's variation in the Burgmüller Peasant *pas de deux* included a lively coda which most of us had never heard before; and though Petipa evidently had no use for this dramatically irrelevant divertissement, its inclusion was here fully justified by the way it was so smoothly introduced into the action, not to mention the superb dancing of Bogomolova and Yevdokimov. In any case, there is Adam's own sanction for this in having incorporated it into his score in the first place. The big first-act waltz, incidentally, may also have been based on a theme by Burgmüller, just as the Huntsmen's Chorus from Weber's *Euryanthe* was pressed into service by Adam for the entrance of the hunting party. In the *Marche des Vignerons* the peasants considerably enlivened the proceedings by making uninhibited use of tambourines, as described in accounts of the 1841 première.

The majority of the bits usually omitted in Western productions—half a dozen bars here, a page or two somewhere else—might not matter very much when considered individually. But at last we were given the opportunity of realising their cumulative importance in giving the drama greater room to breathe, as it were.

A typical instance is the passage of 28 bars to which Ulanova as Giselle points out Albrecht's cottage to Bathilde, and then quickly runs to Berthe's side, as mother and daughter delightfully nod their affirmation on the final chord that the girl is indeed betrothed. Or in the second act, where Myrthe, for once, is allowed every scrap of her music for the completion of her aerial rites. And Hilarion is also given time and music to dance himself into a state of exhaustion before being hustled off by the Wilis to his watery grave. All these small details, in addition, of course, to Ulanova's incomparable performance, helped to make the production an unforgettable experience.

Although Berthe might well have been allowed the whole of the mime-scene in which she warns Giselle that if she goes on dancing she will die and be turned into a Wili, it would have been unreasonable to have expected to hear other parts of the score which Petipa actually suppressed—the first three sections of the Giselle-Albrecht *Pas des Vendanges* (of which, as far as I know, only the opening *andante* has been used in modern times in the Borovansky Ballet production), the original *La Halte des Chasseurs* opening of Act II, or the famous, but nowadays never played, fugue for the Wilis' *danse infernale*, for instance.

Faier conducted the score with great sensitivity and appreciation for its manifold beauties. The second act gained considerably in atmosphere from being taken, in the main, at much slower speeds than I can remember hearing. This was an extreme test of the dancers' *adagio* control and elevation; but how triumphantly they acquitted themselves. In the first act it was interesting to note that, by being danced at a much faster tempo than is customary here, Giselle's and Albrecht's *ballottés* were made to seem the purest expression of youthful *joie de vivre*. **David Hunt**

DECOR

AUTUMN, the season of mists, nostalgia and smoke from burning leaves, enveloped the outside of Covent Garden Opera House; it also permeated three of the four productions given by the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet. The opening scenes of both *Le Lac des Cygnes* and *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* had a definite autumnal air, while the whole of *Giselle* was the very essence of this dying season. A strange coincidence!

Of all the classics given regularly in the West, *Giselle* has been the least mishandled from the point of view of designing. The reason for this is probably that everyone is so much in awe of the old ballet, from the ballerina downwards, that everybody plays safe by simply evoking the period of the ballet's creation. We have seen a plethora of cosy little cottages in the first act, and quite a flurry of arboreal confections in the second. Occasionally, of course, somebody has tried to be clever by pepping the old ballet up and showing the whole thing through more modern eyes, committing, so the critics and public have declared, sacrilege. So back we go again to the conventional way of presenting the ballet.

The designing of the Bolshoi *Giselle* came as a great surprise—not that there was anything surprising about either Volkov's designing or production, but because the designs for the Bolshoi ballets had not, up to this point, been of any great distinction. Yet here was the best piece of designing we had seen of the 115-year-old work. It seems as though, from every point of view, the Russians have tended with the most loving care this beloved Romantic classic.

The first act has been realised with a much lighter touch than in most productions. The trees which surround Giselle's cottage are spindly and they ingeniously pave the way for the supernatural second act. To get this lightness and naturalness into stage trees the Russians do not paint branches and leaves on heavy canvas but appliqué cut-out forms to heavy net. This was the reason why so many of their exterior settings managed to achieve so much feeling of "atmosphere."

The two cottages were solid and realistic, and for once it was possible to imagine people living in them. In the distance was a lake with a

WILI RITES: "Dressed in their wedding gowns and crowned with flowers . . . the beautiful creatures dance in the light of the moon, faster and faster as they feel their hour running out, when they must again return to their ice-cold graves"—the poet Heine's description of the Wilis depicted in Giselle, *Act II.*

GISELLE AS A WILI: Galina Ulanova with the corps de ballet *in the second act of the Bolshoi's production of* Giselle.
Photo: Houston Rogers, by permission of Harmony Films

village and high mountains on the distant shore. This admirably succeeds in placing the ballet—as was presumably the intention—in Bavaria—or at any rate in that part of Europe.

Again, as in the first act of *Le Lac des Cygnes*, the mellow background showed up the costumes to the best possible advantage. These were mainly very good. The only one slightly discordant note was the costume for Bathilde in glittering white, a creation in which it was hard to imagine that anyone would tramp through damp autumn woods. Some of the peasant costumes were rather spoiled by having low backs, particularly so in the case of Giselle herself. All peasant costumes of this region, and almost of any other for that matter, are rather muffled up. They were also made of far too flimsy material. Despite the programme-note's statement that "Plain, hard-working people live here," I cannot imagine that much real hard work could be done in such clothes—at least not for long. However, these are minor points and the general colour scheme—mainly shades of brown—was charming. I rather doubt whether peasants play on tambourines in this part of the world, but I may be wrong.

It was good to have a hunting party which looked as though it had been successfully hunting something or other—two huntsmen bearing a dead stag added a convincing touch.

The second act setting was in many ways similar to that for the first act. The backcloth was different—another part of the lake, with mountains dropping sheer to the water. In place of Giselle's cottage was a regimented row of hollyhocks, which was the only unfortunate feature of the whole designing. I do not know whether the effect was achieved through the use of "dry ice," gauzes, or just very good lighting, but the whole of this act appeared to be shrouded in a soft mist, such as rises from damp places in the night air, and this gave the scene the quality of a lithograph.

There were a few "effects" in this act which were not entirely successful. For instance, Giselle disappeared through the hollyhocks, which might have made a charming exit had it not been for the fact that the flowers made an intrusive rustling; later she appears on the branch of a tree to the same papery accompaniment. The illusion that she had become an ethereal creature, who could, if she so cared, have alighted on the petals of a flower without bending it, was completely destroyed. The Russians are so keen on making such stage effects work to perfection that I was surprised at this rather amateurish mistake. Perhaps, to render them soundless, they might consider making these flowers and branches of rubber.

Although we had no actual flying, we did see the Queen of the Wilis skim across the backcloth in the nearest approach to it. In actual fact she was drawn across on a little trolley: a simple and charming effect which we well might emulate in our own productions. A few more bits of stage magic would have been a help—it's high time a few more of those Wilis took to the air.

Peter Williams

PRESS COMMENT

GISELLE was the least controversial production and the most enthusiastically received by the majority of critics.

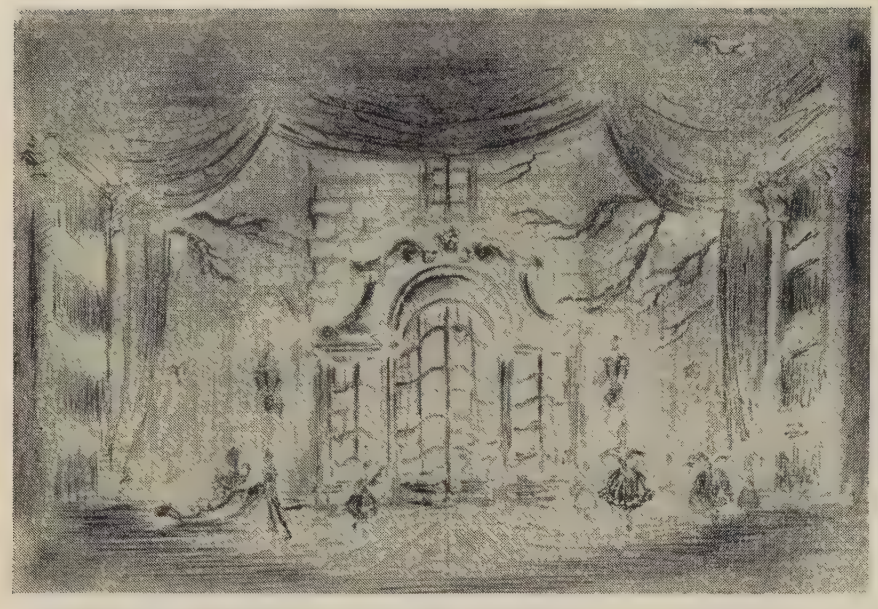
The *Observer* believed that "it came off the stage as fresh and true as though we were back at the first performance in 1839 (*sic*)." Coton echoed this opinion in the *Daily Telegraph*—although he got his dates right—and went even further: "In one sense we are seeing *Giselle* for the first time; previously we have seen productions of it. It was the creation of the whole work even though the calendar says it is 115 years since Grisi first danced it." "Nothing approaching this sort of occasion has been seen on London dance stages within my memory."

The verdict of the *Daily Worker* was that "only one who has come to love the part of Giselle—and it is Ulanova's favourite rôle—could give such an overwhelming performance." Haskell in the *Mail* could find no words adequate to describe one of the greatest experiences he has ever known in the theatre. "Ulanova," he wrote, "has broken the technique barrier."

The *Manchester Guardian* was not quite so impressed. Its critic's impression was that Ulanova's performance in Act II had "an autumnal air about it." "She seemed, still, a very great dancer—but how sad that she and the Bolshoi did not visit us ten years ago." Sacheverell Sitwell in the *Sunday Times* reinforced this comment by reminding us that we are not seeing Ulanova in her best years.

For Cyril Beaumont, in the same paper, she could not "dissipate" his memories of Pavlova, Spessivtzeva, Markova and Chauviré. But Alexander Bland in the *Observer*, with penetrating judgment, wrote: "She showed again the quality we had seen in *Romeo and Juliet*, of rendering her every thought as clear as day."

If the reviews of the company's London repertoire and of the dancing showed up some serious critical blind-spots, at least the thunderous, but discriminating, applause throughout the season left no doubt that the audiences appreciated fully everything they were shown. In future perhaps the public will become as discriminating in its choice of critics of whom to take notice.



DESIGN FOR PROLOGUE:

Outside the grand house, showing the children arriving for the party. Alfred Rodrigues has planned this scene as a more suitable opening than the long scene of the decoration of the Christmas tree.

JAMES BAILEY at work on his designs for Casse *Noisette.*

In the Grand Manner

Designing *Casse Noisette* for La Scala, Milan

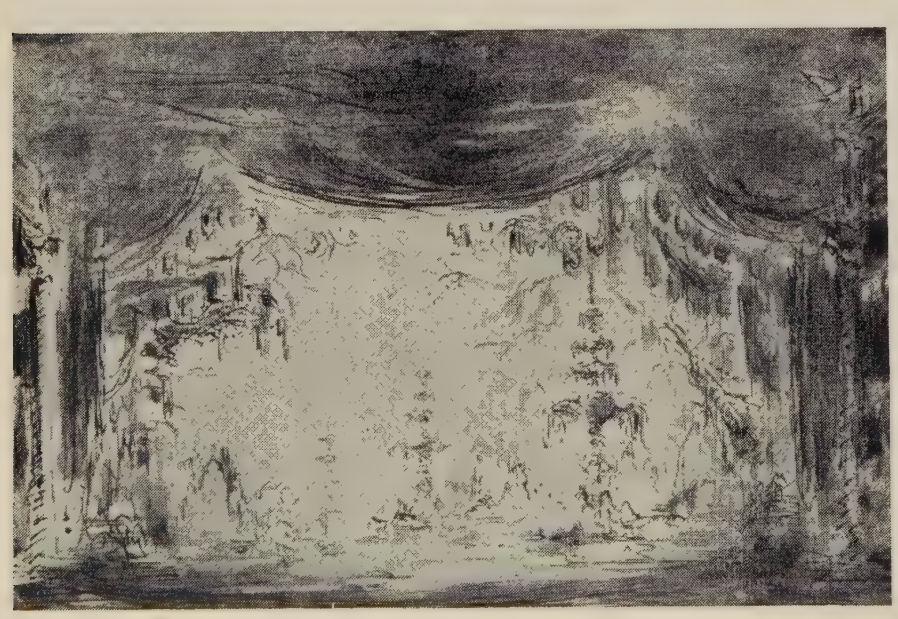
by JAMES BAILEY

Specially photographed by Roy Round

James Bailey has already designed two productions of *Giselle*, for the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden, and Ashton's *Vision of Marguerite* for London's Festival Ballet. His principal work, however, has been in the straight theatre, both in England and America. He is the first British designer to be commissioned to design full-length ballet for the famous La Scala Opera House in Milan. His *Casse Noisette*, which Alfred Rodrigues has produced and choreographed (after the original of Lev Ivanov), will have its première at La Scala at the end of January. There is a strong possibility that Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes will dance at the first performances.

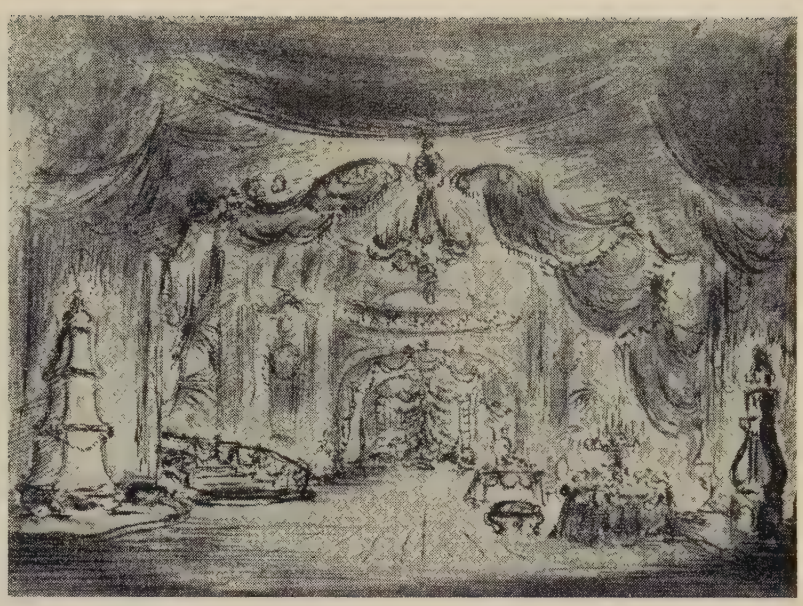
IN designing Alfred Rodrigues' version of *Casse Noisette* for La Scala, Milan, I have tried to re-create the spirit of Ernest Hoffmann's story *The Nutcracker and the King of the Mice* upon which this Ivanov-Tchaikovsky ballet was originally based. I have therefore placed the action in Germany or Austria rather than in Russia where the story is so often set. I have tried to bring a strong atmosphere of Christmas to the production, with the first act opening in a grand house with an elaborate children's party in progress. For a stage the size of La Scala it seemed that the house should be on this scale rather than in the more bourgeois style in which this act is often set.

The ballet opens outside the house with the children arriving through the snow—some on foot with their nurses, some pushed in small sleighs. Although the instructions in Tchaikovsky's score indicate that this prologue music is



FROZEN LANDSCAPE:

Bailey's design, on the left, and his model, on the right, for Act I, Scene 2. He has realised this scene as a fantastic garden suddenly frozen.



BACKGROUND FOR THE PARTY: On the left is Bailey's model, on the right his actual design for Act I, Scene 1. To accord with the enormous dimensions of the La Scala stage, the designer has shown this act as taking place in a very grand house.

to accompany the dressing of the Christmas tree, it seemed better that the tree should be seen through the lighted windows of the house and that the main action was more concerned with the excitement and arrival of the children.

The period of Hoffmann

The architecture of the grand house is late 18th-century, though I have placed the action in the Romantic period of 1830 which is closer to the period of the Hoffmann story. Not only does this period seem to me to be the right one for the ballet but it also has a great lightness and elegance. The skirts of the ladies are full and well clear of the floor and not stiffened by hoops which are never very happy for the line of the dance. It is also a far more suitable line for dancers than the more usual Empire period with its high waistlines and straight diaphanous dresses, always so difficult for dancers to wear.

The appearance of Herr Drosselmayer (a typical Hoffmann character not unlike Dr. Coppelius) bringing with him to the party his fantastic mechanical dolls, establishes the sinister undercurrent so true to the original story. From the child's point of view he makes a very definite impression and creates a feeling of mysterious uneasiness. In this production the mechanical dolls are going to be elaborate presents, each being wheeled on by the footmen in some ornamental manner of presentation—one doll will step out of a miniature Christmas tree, a Swiss doll will appear from a model chalet, another will come from a Christmas cake, while a fourth will be in a basket of fruit. For many of these details I have consulted confectionery books of the period and Mrs. Beeton's cookery book which, though of a slightly later date, contains invaluable details of sweets, cakes and properties such as epergnes, all very typical of the 19th century.

Midnight transformations

When Clara steals down from her night nursery, after the party is over, the magic transformation begins: the owl on top of the grandfather clock changes into Drosselmayer's face; the Christmas tree starts to grow to a vast size and the toys, heaped around the bottom of it, come alive. Mice come out from under all the furniture, the nutcracker, Drosselmayer's special present to Clara, turns into a boy Prince. After the battle between the mice and toy soldiers, the Prince leads Clara to the land of ice and snow.

This I have visualised not as the conventional landscape of fir trees, but as a fantastic garden of grottos and fountains, inspired by Linderhoff, which has suddenly been frozen miraculously. Here Clara and her escort meet the Snow Princess and her cavalier, who emerge from one of the fountains.

So as to give continuity, linking this act with the next, Clara and the boy Prince continue their journey and arrive in the Kingdom of Sweets in a boat drawn by sea horses. I have not seen this act as a conglomoration of sweets and gingerbread, but as a world of spun sugar. Each of the groups in the divertissement has a little pavilion representing the locality of the dance in question—China, Arabia, Spain, etc.

The Sugar Plum Fairy appears out of a crystallised rose; she and her cavalier welcome the children, who explain in mime the extraordinary adventures they have been through. This whole act is inspired by the intricate designs of the great Russian jeweller Carl Fabergé, but realised in icing sugar.

I have tried in my designing to give the story, admittedly a rather thin one for ballet, extra magic with the addition of transformation scenes and theatrical effects, all of which can be well achieved on a stage as big as La Scala, with its magnificent equipment.

VISTA OF SUGAR: Bailey's design for the second act with its pavilions of spun sugar, a representative one for each of the divertissement groups, and its bridges for the entry of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Fifty Years of Service

Phyllis Bedells' Jubilee

by **ANTON DOLIN**

FIFTY years of service in any sphere is something to be proud of. But on this occasion it is not being forgotten, or allowed to pass without some slight but nevertheless sincere and just recognition.

I find it no easy task to write a few lines in honour of the golden jubilee of Phyllis Bedells. There is so much to write, and yet I cannot help feeling that there is but one word that sums up her personal life, her work as a professional dancer and, in later years, as a teacher.

That word is "good," meant in the fullest sense of all that it can express—as dancer, wife, mother, friend and teacher. Her art as a dancer was as British, as strong and loyal to this country as the words of Sir Winston Churchill.

The world was not hers to conquer, as it has been for others of our English dancers. The Empire Theatre in Leicester Square was the scene of her first dancing triumphs in 1910. There she followed with honour and dignity in the lovely footsteps of Adeline Genée.

In 1926–27 Phyllis Bedells and I had a happy partnership which helped to lay the foundation of English ballet. For each of us, with our so totally different upbringing in the dance world, and with our different approach and ideas, it was oddly enough a happy union.

Perhaps a little of my devilry and my more modern approach to the ballet gave her a new enthusiasm and made her a better artist—less prim, and which showed a side of her that she would rather have shielded, and yet in which she unashamedly gloried with her new-found success.

For a success she was, and I am proud to have shared some of it with her over those two happy and good years of healthy, virile dancing.

"A HAPPY UNION": Anton Dolin with Phyllis Bedells in a dance—Exercises—*which they did together first on the pier at Brighton in* 1926. *Later, the number, to Percy Grainger's* Shepherd's Hey, *was brought into their programme at the London Coliseum.*

In the nearly 40 years that I have been on the stage, dancing for more than 30 of them, I have never heard an unkind word said about Phyllis Bedells, or spoken from her own pretty mouth. I cannot say the same of myself, or of many others I know, nor would I personally have it otherwise. But Phyllis, I feel sure, prefers it that way, and is happy in the fact of her goodness—rare indeed in the world of ballet.

I would be disloyal and insincere if I wrote of her as a great English ballerina or as a great English artist. The difference between the ballerina and the artist is quite a large one and, alas, so seldom understood. I know whom I think was our greatest English dance artist, but that is another story.

Phyllis Bedells made her final curtsey at the London Hippodrome in 1935. Her last performance was at the same time a happy, auspicious and sad occasion—happy because the power of her dance was as fine as it had ever been; auspicious because there was a brilliant gathering of dancers to do her honour; sad because we would not see her dance again.

She saw her daughter, Jean, as an important member of the Sadler's Wells Ballet. Then, as the good mother she has always been, she saw her daughter retire to marry and have children. The goodness of her heart lived on sadly after her husband's death. It regained its happiness with her son's marriage.

Today and for many years now she has been teaching, imparting her knowledge to the young students and, in many cases, to the established stars of the ballet, in a straight-forward, honest and good way.

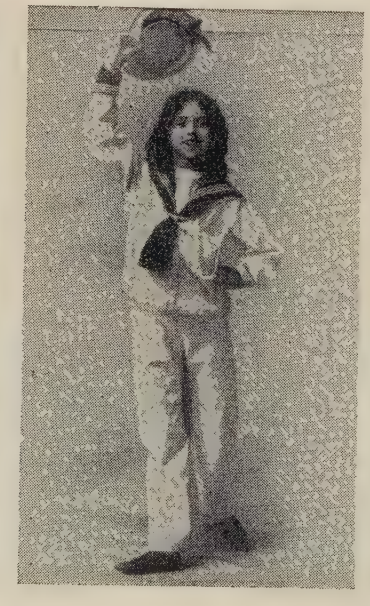
To you, my very dear Phyllis, I send on your fiftieth anniversary my love and heartfelt good wishes, joined by a multitude of loyal and loving friends of the theatre, the ballet and the public that you have served so well.

From my scrapbook

Pictures from the scrapbook of Phyllis Bedells, who celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of her first appearance on the stage on December 20.

WITH MY MOTHER: When I first came to London, my mother and I stayed at a boarding-house in Woburn Place. This was in 1907, *at the time when I first appeared at the Empire. Shortly after this I signed a three-year contract and we moved to a flat.*

FIRST PROFESSIONAL ROLE: In the previous year, 1906, *I appeared in* Alice in Wonderland *at the Prince of Wales Theatre. I was a "surprise item" and appeared in a sailor suit out of an oyster shell.*



FIRST EMPIRE ROLE: In the Belle of the Ball, in 1907, *I appeared as Demon Wrath in an episode with Adeline Genée in the* Rip Van Winkle *scene. Then I had to make one of the quickest changes ever made at the Empire–I had to take off an elaborate make-up and change into this Midshipman costume in one and a half minutes.*

WITH BEAR: During the run of A Day in Paris *at the Empire somebody, I never knew who it was, gave me a teddy bear. It turned somersaults and growled. It was later brought into the* Champs-Elysées *number, in which I did a skipping-rope dance. Here I am outside the stage door of the Empire.*

SPIRIT OF WINE: In the first edition of A Day in Paris, *in* 1909, *I appeared in a black-and-white trio, but in the second edition I had a solo in the* Moulin Rouge *scene. I appeared in this costume, designed by Wilhelm, of bottle-green satin embroidered with purple and green glass grapes and gold leaves. It was very heavy.*

RED RIDING HOOD: At the Empire in 1910, *Lydia Kyasht arranged a divertissement between the ballets and she taught me the exact choreography of the* Red Riding Hood and the Wolf pas de deux *as it was given at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. Bert Ford was the Wolf. This was the first time that England saw this Tchaikovsky-Petipa dance.*

AS A SQUAW: In 1911 *I appeared in the ballet* New York *at the Empire. Carlotta Mosetti was in the principal rôle later taken by Kurylo. In this ballet I first danced with Kurylo's pupil, the* 16*-year-old Stanislas Idzikowski. This is another costume designed by Wilhelm.*

DELIBES MASTERPIECE: Lydia Kyasht danced with Fred Farron in the first production of Sylvia *at the Empire in* 1911. *When she went back to Russia for a holiday, I took over this ballerina rôle and danced with Kurylo. At the same time I was also appearing in* Night Birds (*a version of* Die Fledermaus) *at the Lyric Theatre, as well as taking morning classes with Cecchetti. They were days of hard work, but I loved it. A "growler" cab used to wait to take me from one theatre to the other, but sometimes when it did not turn up there would be one of the new taxis, which were then starting to be seen on the streets.*

SLAVE OF THE LAMP: The pantomine Aladdin *in* 1912 *was the most expensive production ever put on at the Empire. It was a flop and only ran* 10 *performances. The rehearsals were chaotic, but Douglas Maclaren and I rehearsed alone in the bar for eight solid weeks. It was worth it as our dance was the hit of the show.*

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)

SURPRISE VISIT: Members of the Bolshoi Ballet paid a surprise visit to the Sadler's Wells Theatre. They were guests at a tea-party given to launch the new Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet Book. *Peggy Van Praagh, former director of the company, is seen talking to one of the Bolshoi's press representatives.*

DANCERS GET TOGETHER: Two members of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, Sara Neil and Walter Trevor (who are now husband and wife), seen talking to Bolshoi dancer Zvyagina at the same party given to celebrate the publication of the first annual book on the Theatre Ballet. This book follows much the same pattern as the annuals put out by Covent Garden. *Photos: S. Martin*

curtain up!

Fellow Travellers

NOT everyone you saw on the Covent Garden stage during the Bolshoi season was Russian. Quite a few British dancers will now be able to boast for the rest of their lives that they "appeared with the Bolshoi Ballet."

The company needed a large number of "supers" on stage in many scenes of *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, people who added to the stage picture but did not actually dance.

Among them, from Covent Garden's own opera ballet, were Derek Westlake and Peter Brownlee, David Poole, Harry Cordwell and James Campbell, many students from the Sadler's Wells and Rambert schools, a number of young actors and even medical students were recruited. Also among them was Desmond Healey, designer of Kenneth MacMillan's *Solitaire* and of the new Cranko ballet, *The Prince of the Pagodas*, which will have its première at Covent Garden at the beginning of Januar.

Drama Without Words

WILL the day ever come, I wonder, when people will prefer to see Shakespeare danced rather than acted?

When the Bolshoi dancers were at Stratford, producer Glen Byam Shaw described Ulanova, during his welcoming speech to the dancers after the performance of Othello, as "one of the greatest Juliets of all time."

For a man of the drama to describe a dancer in this way is a tribute, not only to Ulanova, but to the possibilities of ballet.

Another Shakespeare Ballet

WHEN it was first announced that the Bolshoi dancers were going to Stratford-on-Avon, and that they had asked specially to see a production of *Othello*, the question I heard most in London ballet circles was "Why *Othello* more than any other Shakespeare play that happens to be in the Stratford repertoire?"

There was a very good reason why they chose *Othello*. I hear that the Bolshoi is already planning a second Shakespearean ballet as an addition to its *Romeo and Juliet*, and that it is to be *Othello*.

What better way of teaching the dancers how the story should be treated than showing them Shakespeare on its "home ground" at Stratford.

Maybe that long day's outing was not just relaxation for the company, but just another day of hard work in preparation for a new ballet.

Bolshoi's Music Souvenir

AS well as the films they made while they were here, the Bolshoi Ballet left behind in London an important musical souvenir of their visit.

When the rest of the company returned to Moscow the young conductor Gennadi Rozhdestvensky stayed in London for a week longer.

During that time he conducted the Covent Garden orchestra in a complete recording of the score of *Le Lac des Cygnes* as danced by the company here. It will be issued before long by H.M.V.

Rozhdestvensky, because he is fast losing his hair, looks much older than he really is. At 24 he is the youngest of the Bolshoi Theatre's team of conductors, although he has been conducting ballet regularly at the Bolshoi for the past three years.

No Harp for the Harem

SOME of the London dancers who acted as supers in the Bolshoi Ballet season had a frightening few moments one night during a performance of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*.

During the second-act interlude their job was to carry across the stage the litter bearing Raissa Struchkova as Maria. On the way across they were horrified to hear a flood of under-the-breath cursing in Russian from the ballerina, and immediately they thought that they had done something wrong.

However, a smile and a whispered "Merci" from the dancer reassured them to some extent when at last they reached the wings. The explanation came a few minutes later, when an interpreter told them that it had nothing to do with them. "She only forgettink to bring harp," he said—Maria is supposed to be seen clutching the harp she has salvaged from the Tartar raid of the first act.

Black Market Convert

NEVER in the history of ballet can there have been such a black market in tickets as there was for the Bolshoi Ballet's performances at Covent Garden and at the Davis Theatre,

"But my dear, fancy having to cherish the memory of seeing Ulanova dance at Croydon!"

Reproduced by permission of *Punch*

Croydon. Fifty pounds was asked, and got, by spivs selling good seats in Floral Street on the day of any Ulanova performance at Covent Garden. Teacher Kathleen Crofton paid £8 one evening for standing-room, and American dancer and choreographer, Paul Szilard, paid £10 for what he gloomily described as "kneeling room."

However, not all the spivs lined their pockets with gold. One evening a spiv found himself landed with a ticket which he could not sell, so there was no alternative for him to do other than see the performance. He sat in his stall entranced; after the first act he turned to his neighbour and declared, " 'Cor blimey, I 'aven't seen anythink like this since the Cup Final." The next evening he was in Floral Street again, but not selling this time—he was trying to buy seats so that he could see all the other performances.

Moscow's Cheap Afternoon

WITH one exception, all Moscow's theatres have reduced their prices by nearly one-fifth. The exception, as you probably guessed, is the Bolshoi Theatre. Obviously the dancers and singers of its two great companies are as popular at home as abroad.

It is the custom in Moscow theatres to raise prices by one-quarter for first nights, special benefit performances and for the appearances of famous guest artists. On the other hand, the price of admission to matinées is only one-quarter that of evening performances.

Spinning to Fame

A DANCER to watch when the Sadler's Wells Ballet returns to London at Christmas is Merle Park. Within the course of a few days recently she took over, at short notice, two different rôles in *Les Patineurs*—first the White Skater, then one of the girls in blue. A dancer who can be relied upon in such circumstances will always be sure of progress.

Oddly enough, it was in this same ballet, several years ago, that another unknown dancer spun to fame—Rowena Jackson. A dancer was taken ill during the performance and Rowena, standing in the wings, was instructed to go on by Dame Ninette de Valois. "But what shall I do?" Rowena demanded. "Just twirl, girl, twirl!" commanded Dame Ninette. She did exactly that and has done so ever since.

Dance Painters

SOME readers will remember that Frank Moncion, one of New York City Ballet's leading dancers, is also a talented painter. But I wonder whether he could equal the record of Ulanova's partner, Yuri Zhdanov? During his short stay over here Zhdanov produced no less than 16 oil paintings of London scenes. Discounting the days when he would have been rehearsing full-time, I calculate that this represents an output of nearly one finished picture a day. Quite an achievement!

Ill-fated Tour

THE European tour of New York City Ballet has been dogged by bad luck as far as its ballerinas are concerned. First of all, within the first few weeks of the tour, Maria Tallchief lost her baby prematurely and returned home to New York. Then, while the company was appearing in Copenhagen, Tanaquil LeClercq was struck down with Polio and was immediately taken to hospital. At the time of writing it is not known what progress she is making.

LeClercq's husband, George Balanchine, remained with her in Denmark while the company went on to fulfil its engagements in other Scandinavian countries. Balanchine's previous wife was Maria Tallchief.

Our sympathy goes out to Tanaquil LcClercq, to Balanchine and to the company they head.

The Fruits of Devotion

WHEN the Bolshoi Ballet flew home on November 3, they left London the richer for three new clubs—the Ulanova Club, the Timofeyeva Club and the Karelskaya Club. These clubs were formed by the fans of these popular ballerinas.

Karelskaya invited members of her club to lunch.

It is rumoured that members of these new ballet clubs are to be invited to Moscow to see their idols dancing on their home ground.

BALLET QUIZ

By Nora Robinson

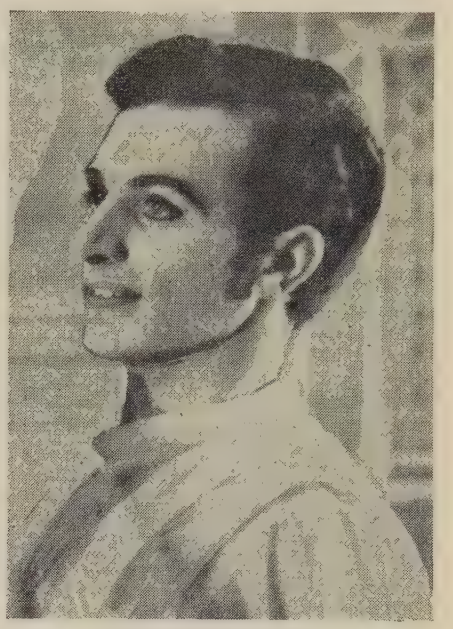
1. **Which famous ballerina was the first Giselle:**
   (*a*) Carlotta Grisi? (*b*) Fanny Cerrito? (*c*) Taglioni?
2. **Who was it Garrick christened the "Shakespeare of the Dance":**
   (*a*) Petipa? (*b*) Fokine? (*c*) Noverre?
3. **Which was the first ballet school to receive official recognition and patronage:**
   (*a*) The Sadler's Wells School? (*b*) L'Academie Royale de la Danse in France? (*c*) Conservatorio di Danza in Milan?
4. **Who was the daughter of a famous dancer who became Ballet Mistress of the Sadler's Wells Company in 1946:**
   (*a*) Margot Fonteyn? (*b*) Felicity Gray? (*c*) Jean Bedells?
5. **Which was the first ballet by Ninette de Valois to have its première at Covent Garden:**
   (*a*) *Promenade*? (*b*) *Don Quixote*? (*c*) *Orpheus and Euridice*?
6. **In honour of which great personality was *The Firebird* revived by the Sadler's Wells Company at the 1954 Edinburgh Festival:**
   (*a*) Stravinsky? (*b*) Fokine? (*c*) Diaghilev?
7. **Which well-known American dancer made a great personal success in *Pillar of Fire*:**
   (*a*) Nora Kaye? (*b*) Maria Tallchief? (*c*) Alicia Alonso?

Answers in column three

happy birthday to...

		Dec.
Harold Lang	Ballet Theatre	21
Geoffrey Corbett	Festival Ballet	21
Alan Carter	Choreographer in Munich	24
Oleg Sabline	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	24
David Lichine	In Hollywood	25
Leon de Pian	Ballet Theatre	25
Noel Rossana	In revue, *For Amusement Only*	25
Fernand Nault	Ballet Theatre	27
Maretta Grace	Festival Ballet	28
Christina Katin	Festival Ballet	28
Margaret Dale	Television Producer	30
		1957 Jan.
Peter Clegg	Sadler's Wells Ballet	3
Ray Barra	Ballet Theatre	3
Diana Dear	Ballet Theatre	3
Nana Prudente	Ballet Theatre	5
Dame Adeline Genée		6
Ivan Dragadze	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	7
Virginia Barnes	Ballet Theatre	7
Bronislava Nijinska	Teaching in America	8
Johaar Mosaval	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	8
Calliope Venieris	Ballet Theatre	10
Kurt Jooss	In Germany	12
Roland Petit	Ballet de Paris	13
John Kriza	Ballet Theatre	15
Mary Munro	Ballet Rambert Organisation	15
Nora Kaye	Ballet Theatre	17
Belinda Wright	Festival Ballet	18
André Dufresne	Canadian National Ballet	18
Leo Guerard	Ballet Theatre	18
Katharine Stewart	Canadian National Ballet	19
Elizabeth Carroll	Ballet Theatre	19
Herbert Bliss	New York City Ballet	21
Monique Bernachova	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	23
Maria Tallchief	New York City Ballet	24

Dancer of To-day



In MacMillan's Solitaire
Photo: Denis de Marney

LESLIE WHITE

BORN in Hammersmith. Educated at the Mellor Lane Comprehensive School. Started dancing in 1950, *under Pamela Howard. Took RAD examinations and joined the Sadler's Wells School in January*, 1953. *Made his stage début with the Covent Garden Opera Ballet and entered the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in* 1955. *Married to Theatre Ballet soloist, Patricia Cox.*

Rôles (*with Covent Garden Opera Ballet*): *Morris Dancer in* Gloriana; *Tavern Dancer in* Carmen; (*with Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet*): *Rake and Tailor in* The Rake's Progress; Les Patineurs; Les Rendezvous; *Popular Song in* Façade; *First Sailor in* Pineapple Poll; *Monotony in* Somnambulism; *Bourgeois in* Café des Sports.

APART from the promising account he gave of Mosaval's rôle in Britten's ill-fated opera *Gloriana*, Leslie White first attracted attention about 18 months ago by his appearances in rôles for neither of which was he named in the programme. Firstly he substituted for Dudley Davies as the Tailor in *The Rake's Progress*, later he took Walter Trevor's place in the first Theatre Ballet performance of *Les Patineurs*.

These two small parts revealed immediately both his gift for characterisation—unusual in a dancer so young—and his strong, virile technique. They were followed by other cameos equally impressive in *Café des Sports* and *Pineapple Poll*.

The most important part we have seen him in so far has been the Monotony variation in MacMillan's *Somnambulism*, where he portrayed tortured, neurotic agony well enough to be a boon to anyone trying to sell sleeping pills. His Rake, of which we hear excellent accounts, we have unfortunately so far been unable to see. However, it is obvious that in White the Wells have a character dancer of considerable potentiality.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. (*a*); 2. (*c*); 3. (*b*); 4. (*c*); 5. (*b*); 6. (*c*); 7. (*a*).

Starting from Scratch

Forming a National Ballet in Turkey

by TRAVIS KEMP

In various parts of the world British dancers, teachers and choreographers are doing magnificent ballet pioneering work in much the same way as did Marie Rambert in England. All these people are paving the way for the future by guarding the great traditions of the past. Two years ago, Travis Kemp and Molly Lake went to Turkey to continue the development of ballet in that country. Here is the story of their work.

REHEARSAL: Travis Kemp, author of this article, rehearsing the 14-year-old Turkish dancer, Neyran Özmen, in Molly Lake's Fadette, *for the performance at the State Opera House in Ankara.*

Travis Kemp, together with his wife Molly Lake, went to Turkey two years ago to carry on the work of forming a ballet school and a national ballet. Both well-known as dancers with various British companies, they jointly formed the Embassy Ballet in 1945. *This later became the Continental Ballet, which toured England until the time its directors left for Turkey.*

ON May 22, 1956 the inaugural performance of the Turkish Classical Ballet Company took place at the State Opera House in Ankara. With three exceptions this company consisted entirely of pre-graduate dancers from the National Conservatoire.

The Conservatoire Ballet School came into existence in 1948 when, at the request of the Turkish Government, Dame Ninette de Valois sent Joy Newton and Audrey Knight to pioneer in this unexplored ballet territory.

The suggestion for this voyage of discovery came from Canon Hutchinson, one time vicar of St. John's Church, Waterloo Road, and a great supporter of the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells theatres, and later chaplin to the British Embassy in Istanbul. He persuaded Dame Ninette to undertake what appeared to be an exceedingly nebulous project, but in the light of present developments his faith was entirely justified.

Turkish children have a definite talent for ballet, having inherited a very fine national dance tradition, and particularly as far as the male dancer is concerned. They are quick to learn and have retentive memories, a natural facility for *pirouettes*, a feeling for movement and, in the case of the girls, strong feet for point work.

BRITONS ABROAD: I

As yet they lack self-discipline, though they respond well to a firm but friendly discipline in class and at rehearsal, but only if great vitality and enthusiasm are shown on the part of the teacher. This can be extremely exhausting for the teacher, for he or she can never relax for an instant. They have still to absorb the devastating truth that only through blood, sweat and tears can a ballet dancer be made, the boys especially having a deep-rooted aversion to hard work. This is due to three main causes: they have had no opportunity of seeing ballet other than in an occasional film; they have only recently come into contact with so arduous and vocational an approach as that demanded by the classical dance; the emancipation of the women is so very recent.

There are now 62 students in the school and we expect to admit at least another 10 this winter. In June, 1957, the first graduations will take place. The ages of the students range from nine to nineteen. The majority are boarders and all are state-sponsored. They must pass a yearly examination and may be discarded after any of these tests. Those who graduate successfully will be drafted to the Opera.

Our tasks in Turkey are numerous, for, not only have the dancers and choreographers to be created physically, but they must also be moulded mentally to achieve an understanding of the tradition of service required by this most exacting art.

Perhaps our most difficult problem is that during the next five years only a small number of students will graduate—quite insufficient in themselves to form a ballet company. By the time a suitable number of graduates eventually become available, many of the first would undoubtedly have drifted away. Therefore, in order to hold the interest of the pupils, some of whom have already been in the school for nine years, we have found it necessary to bring this new company into being without further delay.

Stage prejudice

We must also break down the remaining prejudice existing in Turkey against the stage as a career. Many parents still feel

YOUNG ENTRY (left): Three nine-years-old Turkish students, after six months training. These children have a natural talent for ballet and learn quickly.

PAS DE TROIS *(right): Three older students rehearsing the* Swan Lake pas de trois. *They are Ülker Sözlü* (17), *Hüsnü Sunal* (19) *and Meral Öge.*

that professional ballet is no life for their sons and daughters—particularly daughters—and as a result, a great deal of possible talent is lost to the theatre. Finally, we have to arouse sufficient interest to create a ballet audience.

We have already produced at the Opera House *Les Sylphides* and the second act of *Swan Lake*, as well as revivals of Molly Lake's *Fadette* and *Music Hall* and Keith Lester's *Faust* ballet. We have also staged two new ballets, *Soirée Vienne* and *The Musicians of Brehmen*, the latter to an original score by the Turkish composer Bulent Arel.

The coming season should add greatly to the repertoire of the company and establish ballet as an integral part of the Opera. We hope to produce works with scores by two of the best-known Turkish composers, Ulvi Cemal Erkin and Adnan Saygun.

YOUNG SOLOISTS: Meric Süman and Feridun Ulusoy, aged 13 *and* 15 *respectively, in a* pas de deux *from Molly Lake's* Music Hall.

We have first class school premises, including a theatre and school orchestra, and an excellent opera house where there is already a high standard of opera and drama performance. The possibilities are endless and the job an exciting one.

Since we took over the school two years ago, with Dulcie Pyne as our assistant, as successors to Beatrice Appleyard, we have been fortunate enough to have had the help, interest and co-operation of three very enthusiastic and enterprising men—Fuad Turkay, Director of the State Conservatoire, Muhsin Ertugrul, Director of the State Opera and Cevat Altar, Director-General of Fine Arts. We hope that, with their continued assistance, Turkey will eventually be able to send her national ballet out into the world to take its place among the great established companies.

NEXT MONTH: In this new series Peggy Van Praagh will write about mounting Sadler's Wells ballets in Germany and Canada.

FADETTE: *Molly Lake's ballet, as given by the advanced students on the stage of the school in Ankara.*

LES SYLPHIDES: *Fokine's Romantic classic on the stage of the State Opera House. Students from the school who graduate are drafted to the Opera.*

MUSIC HALL: *Molly Lake's ballet, as given at the State Opera House.*

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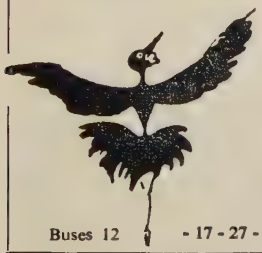

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WHAT THE VIEWERS SAW: Pictures taken during the actual performance, from the television screen of Galina Ulanova as Odette and Nicolai Fadeyechev as Prince Siegfried in the adage *from* Swan Lake *Act II.* *Photos: Dance and Dancers*

Ulanova as Odette

THE BOLSHOI THEATRE BALLET in an excerpt from Act Two of *Swan Lake*. With three film extracts. Given on BBC Television on October 19. Decor by Versaladze, reproduced for television by Richard Wilmot. The Covent Garden Orchestra, conducted by Yuri Faier. Produced by Margaret Dale.

GALINA ULANOVA
NICOLAI FADEYECHEV

Film Extracts: *Prince Igor*, Kondratieva in *Cinderella*, Ulanova and Gabovich in *Romeo and Juliet*.

THE inevitable *Swan Lake* on television! But how different this production was from the postage stamp versions we have almost come to take for granted. It was a revelation to find that the BBC had provided the dancers with such a generous amount of studio space. Here was no case of too jumbled and kaleidoscopic a picture on our screens, and it was certainly not another production saved only by the quality of the dancing—although it did confirm and strengthen our previous impressions of the all-round strength of the Bolshoi *corps de ballet*.

Those who were disappointed with the stage production were mainly so because the choreography is almost entirely (and consequently monotonously) composed on diagonal lines. An even more important criticism was that the actual detail of the choreography was inadequate and inferior to that in our own production, which we still optimistically refer to as the *original* version. Another point made was that there was far too much movement for the *corps* during the *pas de deux*.

TELEVISION
Reviewed by E. C. MASON

Margaret Dale proved that good television can also be good ballet. Cleverly placed cameras took some of the diagonal emphasis away, or used the diagonal lines to provide some attractive perspective effects—with the *corps de ballet*, it appeared, dancing in almost limitless space. The *pas de deux* was mainly taken in full-length "close-ups" so there was no likelihood of anyone being distracted by a constantly moving background of dancers. The programme, being only an excerpt, was not long enough to enable us to become bored with the lack of variety in the choreography.

Ulanova herself danced exceptionally well, and did not appear at all ill at ease working in a medium which has reputedly put other experienced dancers off in past programmes. Her performance in the *pas de deux*—she did not dance the solo—may well have been intended as her answer to those who have suggested that Soviet ballet has lost the "grand manner." I did not care for her headdress which seemed most unflattering. Her final pose in supported lift was very effective, and the fact that it became vaguely indistinct—whether this was by accident or design I do not know—made it even more beautiful.

Although, on a few occasions, the dancers tended to disappear into the white background, and the violinist had some intonation difficulties during the *pas de deux*, it was one of the better ballet programmes that television has given us. Most of us would, I think, have preferred to have done without the film extracts or, at least, have had them given with a well-informed commentary.

Richard Buckle's impression of this television performance will be found on page 9 of this issue.

IN THE STUDIO: Pictures taken in the BBC's Lime Grove studios during the actual performance of the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet's television production of excerpts from Swan Lake *Act II. Ulanova is seen with Fadeyechev.* *Photos: BBC*

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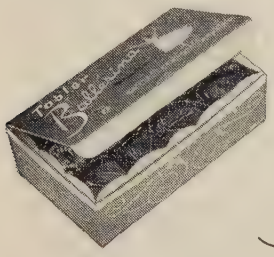

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THE AUTHOR: Ivor Guest, who has written many books on the Romantic period of ballet in the last century, pictured in his study.
Photo: G. B. L. Wilson

Historian of the Romantic era

BALLET historians are always rare—rarer even than those traditional rarities of ballet's aviary, the choreographers. The reason for this is quite clear: ballet history is a highly specialised subject, and its study requires just as much skill, patience, knowledge and historical sense as any one of the more obviously rewarding branches of social history.

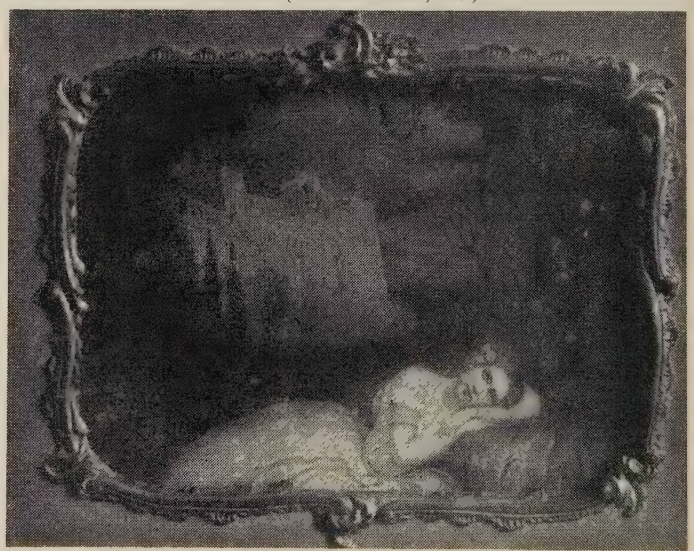
Ivor Guest, who in many ways is the most important ballet historian in the Western world, has just celebrated the tenth anniversary of his first appearance as a ballet writer. During the past decade not only has he added greatly to our store of factual knowledge about 19th-century French ballet, but with his writings he has managed to make ballet history live.

The first idea of writing ballet history came to Ivor Guest in 1945 when travelling in a third-class railway carriage from Germany, where he was stationed with the Forces, to Brussels on leave.

Before the war, when up at Cambridge, he had been fascinated by history, particularly the social and political life in France during the reign of Napoleon III. When, during the war, he first became interested in ballet, it was a natural development to wonder what kind of ballet existed in Paris during that period.

After that fateful train journey, as soon as he arrived in Brussels he went to the library to look up newspapers of 1870 for news of the first production of *Coppélia*. Just before he was demobilised he spent his last leave in Paris, and continued his study of *Coppélia* at the Opéra and Bibliothèque National. On his return to England he wrote an article on *Coppélia* and submitted it to Richard Buckle, then editor of the magazine *Ballet*. Buckle printed the article at the end of 1946 and Ivor Guest's new career was under way.

THE SUBJECT: A painting, by Vizentini, of Fanny Cerrito in the ballet Alma. *She is the subject of Ivor Guest's new book,* Fanny Cerrito, The Life of a Romantic Ballerina (*Phoenix House*, 30*s*.).



His latest book, *Fanny Cerrito, The Life of a Romantic Ballerina*, is typical of his work. Scholarly and informative in structure, painstakingly accurate in detail, it breathes life into its dead subject. The whole story of Cerrito, the way she lived and the way she danced, is set down, and the book also offers innumerable sidelights on the period of the Romantic ballet as a whole.

The story how the book ever came to be written has all the attributes of detective fiction. It started when Mr. Guest was preparing the appendix for his standard work, *The Ballet of the Second Empire*. This appendix gives the dates of birth and death of all the ballerinas who appeared at the Paris Opéra during the period. All these dates were obtained without undue difficulty, or rather all but one for the date of Fanny Cerrito's death at first eluded him.

The popular idea that she died in Switzerland in 1899 seemed suspicious, for if true it would have meant that she died in the same year and in the same country as Carlotta Grisi. However it was on Switzerland that Mr. Guest began his researches in 1950. But all to no avail.

In early 1951 he found by chance (through a small notice in a contemporary French newspaper) where Cerrito was living in 1870. At once he placed the information with a professional researcher in Paris, Miss Abbott. Eventually Miss Abbott traced the date of the dancer's death by an entry in the French Land Registry, as Cerrito had still owned property when she died. Miss Abbott was able to get the name and address of the lawyer who handled the will. This firm proved to be still in practice, and she was able to examine the actual will in the notary's archives. The residuary legatee was a Spanish lady living in Madrid.

Ivor Guest then got into touch with a close friend, Doña Dolores de Pedrosa. The name was a common one in Spain, but by the kind of coincidence that only happens to the good historian, Señorita Pedrosa actually knew the family of the lady in question. It was Cerrito's daughter by the Marquis of Bedmar, and Cerrito's grand-daughter and great-grand-daughter were still living in Madrid.

Early in 1952 Mr. Guest went to Madrid and met Cerrito's family. They were immensely co-operative and he acquired the complete story of the ballerina's later years, together with many old photographs, paintings and drawings.

Armed with this priceless information that had come into his hands almost by chance, he continued with his researches on her early life. Almost before he realised it he was gathering the material for the biography now published.

The irony of it is that in July 1950, Ivor Guest went to Montmartre Cemetery for a ceremony at Vestris's tomb. There, had he but known it at the time, less than 50 yards away is the last resting place of Fanny Cerrito. If only chance had led him to that tomb he would have been spared the lengthy but rewarding research for the date of her death. But he might never have traced the ballerina's descendants, and Fanny Cerrito would probably still be without a biographer. **Clive Barnes**

Fanny Cerrito, The Life of a Romantic Ballerina, **by Ivor Guest (Phoenix House, 30s.) will be reviewed in full next month.**

From the Horse's Mouth

NEW BOOKS

The Bolshoi Theatre Ballet by Yuri Slonimsky (Central Books, 8*s.* 6*d.*)

HERE is a book which makes the perfect supplement to Hélène Kirsova's recent volume on the Bolshoi Ballet. Slonimsky goes into great detail about the history of the company and its productions, and he states very clearly the reasons for them being what they are. It is naturally more biassed than Kirsova's book, but this true record of the present Moscow attitude makes it invaluable. It contains some good photographs as well as admirable, if academic, drawings—some in colour. Altogether remarkable value for the money.

Ulanova, by B. Lvov-Anokhin (Central Books, 2*s.* 6*d.*). *Raisa Struchkova*, by Herman Fradkin (Central Books, 1*s.*)

IT is a pity that our Western ballerinas have not been so well treated as have these Bolshoi ballerinas in inexpensive literature. The public and critics might understand them better were it the case. Both these well-illustrated booklets give descriptive accounts of the most important rôles danced by the two ballerinas seen recently at Covent Garden. They also give details of their lives from the time they first took up dancing.

Well Mixed Grill

The Ballet Annual No. 11, edited by Arnold I. Haskell (A. & C. Black, 25*s.*)

AFTER eleven years, the mould into which these yearly books is poured needs no further description from me. The main emphasis this year is on the 25th anniversary of Sadler's Wells Ballet. But there are other delights as well—George Auric writing on the Diaghilev Ballet and Jean Cocteau, Ivor Guest uncovering more of ballet's forgotten characters, while MacMillan's scenario for *Noctambules* is given together with some excellent photographs by John Hart. The mixture is good and so is the lay-out. **P.W.**

London's Festival Ballet ANNUAL 1956-1957

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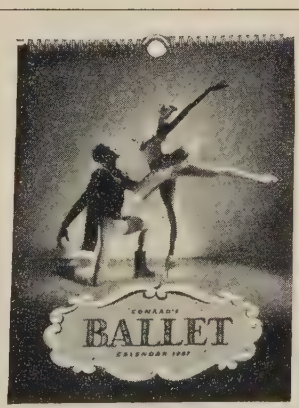

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Beecham's *Nutcracker Suite*

NEW RECORDS
Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

Tchaikovsky: *Casse-Noisette*—Suite. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Sir Thomas Beecham). Philips SBR6213. 10in. 24*s.*

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM obtains a superlative performance of the *Nutcracker Suite*, one of his favourite "musical lollipops"—as he described it in a recent broadcast talk—with which to end a concert.

When Tchaikovsky "salvaged" these eight movements from the score in the form of a concert suite after the ballet had failed at its première, he could have had little idea of the world-wide popularity the work was one day to achieve. Most of us have probably heard the Suite so many times that we might not think it possible for yet another recording of it to add to our appreciation of the familiar pieces.

But Beecham's is not just another unnecessary duplication of an often-recorded work—listening to it, I had the extraordinary sensation that I was hearing much of the music for the first time. The tingling lightness of the *Miniature Overture*, the gossamer, Queen Mab-like delicacy of the *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy*, the buoyancy and zest of the *Trepak*, the perky humour of the *Chinese Dance*—all this is brought out entrancingly, though I am still not reconciled to Beecham's slowish tempo for the *Dance of the Flutes*, which would certainly play havoc with Ivanov's Mirlitons in a theatre performance. The recording is rich, balanced and beautifully clear throughout.

Those wanting a larger helping from the ballet will still need to have Fistoulari's Decca recording of the Suite on LXT2611, for the sake of the second suite from the music assembled by the conductor with which it is coupled. Dorati's splendid complete recording on two Mercury discs, reviewed in March, 1955, is at present unavailable, but I hope only temporarily.

Bach for Balanchine

Bach: Double Violin Concerto in D Minor. *Sarabande* from Violin Sonata No. 2. Violin Concerto in E. Leonid Kogan, Elisabeth Gilels (violins), Philharmonia String Orchestra (Otto Ackermann). Columbia 33CX1373. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

THE Bach Double Concerto, which served as the musical ground-plan for some of Balanchine's most chaste and symmetrical choreography, in his *Concerto Barocco*, is here given an impeccably finished performance, faithfully reproduced in a spacious and balanced recording. The gifted Soviet violinist Leonid Kogan and his wife Elisabeth Gilels, the sister of the Russian pianist Emil Gilels, play the solo parts with musicianship and fine technique.

Kogan's assured and expressive playing of the unaccompanied *Sarabande* and of the solo part of the E major concerto will be found no less rewarding by those primarily interested in the Double Concerto because of its ballet associations.

Berlioz Ballet

Berlioz: *Symphonie Fantastique.* Boston Symphony Orchestra (Charles Munch). HMV ALP1384. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

IT is good news indeed, especially for those who saw it in its heyday and know what a wonderful ballet it can be, that Massine is to revive his *Symphonie Fantastique* for the Paris Opéra, and with the original Bérard décor.

This latest recording of the music—the seventh LP version to appear—offers little competition to von Karajan's masterly performance on Columbia. For although the Boston Symphony play with admirable brilliance and the recording reproduces everything clearly, Munch's reading is disappointingly insensitive, and suggests that he regards the composer more as an aggressive extrovert than as the hypersensitive if flamboyant Romantic we know him to have been from his writings as well as from his intensely subjective music.

The least successful movements are the first, where exaggerated tempo changes are largely responsible for dissipating the menacing, nightmarish atmosphere, and the waltz movement, which is singularly lacking in nocturnal magic.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTS

Stravinsky: *The Firebird.* Suisse Romande Orchestra (Ernest Ansermet). Decca LXT 5115. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

Verdi arr. Mackerras: *The Lady and the Fool.* Philharmonia Orchestra (Charles Mackerras). HMV CLP1059. 12in. 33*s.* 11½*d.*

Homage to Pavlova. Ballet music identified with Anna Pavlova to honour the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of her death. Philharmonia Orchestra (Efrem Kurtz). HMV ALP1301. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

Stravinsky: *Pulcinella.* Soloists, Cleveland Orchestra (Igor Stravinsky). Philips ABL 3091. 12in. 38*s.* 3*d.*

Gluck: *Don Juan.* Vienna Symphony Orchestra (Rudolf Moralt). Nixa WLP5028. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

J. Strauss arr. Désormière: *Le Beau Danube.* Rossini: *William Tell*—Ballet Music. London Philharmonic Orchestra (Jean Martinon). Decca LXT5149. 12in. 39*s.* 7½*d.*

Sadler's Wells Ballet Silver Jubilee. Royal Opera House Orchestra (Robert Irving). HMV CLP1070. 12in. 33*s.* 11½*d.*

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So You Want to Dance?

PHYLLIS BEDELLS, whose fiftieth anniversary as a dancer is commemorated on pages 24 and 25 of this issue, teaching at her famous school in Quex Road, London.

Since she retired from the stage in 1935 she has devoted her life to teaching the youngergeneration as well as many of today's famous dance stars.

Photo: K. Hutton

Jubilee teacher

PHYLLIS BEDELLS was born with a theatrical spoon in her mouth. Her father was founder, producer and musical director of the Bristol Amateur Operatic Association, and he remained with that organisation for 31 years. Her mother was a delightful pianist; a number of charming pieces of music written by her were published some years ago by Augener's.

Many ballet lovers remember Phyllis Bedells to this day for the brilliance of her dancing. But their debt to her extends far beyond that, for it is probable that most of them are unaware of the full significance of her success for English dancers. It is almost impossible for us to realise today just how hopeless it once was for an English dancer to even try to succeed. As *première danseuse* in direct succession to Genée and Kyasht at the old Empire, Phyllis Bedells conquered prejudices and convention and proved that an English dancer with an English name could succeed.

Those were the days when the girls of the *corps de ballet* were so shocked at sleeveless costumes that they threatened to strike. Bare midriffs or arms were inadmissible, and had to be covered with flesh-coloured tights. The gay and carefree days of Edward VII, himself a frequent visitor to the Empire, were hard days for a ballerina. Most male rôles were danced *en travesti* and a ballerina rarely had the support of a male partner to enhance the beauty of her movements. She, therefore, had largely to do without lifts, supported *pirouettes* and finger *fouettés*.

Adeline Genée had a profound influence on Phyllis Bedells. A tremendously hard worker (for two hours a day the stage was left entirely for her use), Genée once asked her how old she was. She replied: "Fifteen, madame, nearly sixteen," only to have the reply, "I was a ballerina at sixteen." But in 1910, when Kyasht left for a holiday in Russia, she took over her part of the Debutante in *The Dancing Master*. This was the day before her seventeenth birthday, and so, by the skin of her teeth, she managed to become a ballerina while she was still sixteen years old.

All this occurred before the Diaghilev Company made its first appearance at Covent Garden. Up to then Kyasht's choreography, which was based on the old Imperial Russian Ballet, was the best seen, and in many of the ballets produced by Fred Farren at the Empire, the leading dancers worked out their own steps, which were adapted to fit into the framework of whatever type of ballet was being performed.

Her stage career came to an end with her farewell matinée at the Hippodrome in 1935, but her ballet career still continues. Any account of Phyllis Bedells must mention her later work as a teacher, for it is unlikely that the extent of her activities as a teacher and director of a flourishing school, and her duties as Vice-President of the Royal Academy of Dancing, are fully realised.

Looking through her autobiography, *My Dancing Days*, was like turning the pages of a charming old album, but I found it extremely hard to determine exactly when she first started to teach.

Even at the height of her career at the Empire she always seemed to have pupils around her. Her first school was Theodore Gilmer's in Nottingham. He was a teacher of the old school who gave lessons to his own accompaniment on the violin. When she was eleven it was there that she first found she had some aptitude for teaching when he asked her to help in the classes.

Shortly after her first appearance at the Empire in 1907, Genée recommended her to study with Madame Cavalazzi, and with her she trained very hard in the technique of the Italian School. Later the management of the Empire generously arranged for her to take lessons with Alexander Genée, and so she was introduced to the Danish style. Then she studied the Russian method with Adolph Bolm, and through him she met Cecchetti and became the first private pupil Cecchetti had in England outside the Diaghilev company.

Classes with Pavlova

In 1912 Pavlova was persuaded to take a limited number of pupils, and she was of the fortunate few to be selected. Whenever Pavlova was at Ivy House she attended her classes, and from then on for a number of years she studied with Cecchetti and Pavlova alternately.

She had been associated with the Royal Academy of Dancing from its very beginnings. There had been no State school in England, nor any authoritative body such as existed in Russia, France and Denmark to preserve the great tradition of the art. In 1920, Philip Richardson of *The Dancing Times* organised his Dancers' Circle Dinners to discuss the need for an association of experts to guide teachers and young dancers in the correct technique of ballet, in addition to safeguarding the parents of young dancers. These very important meetings resulted in the foundation of the Association of Operatic Dancing, which was to become in 1935 the Royal Academy of Dancing.

Its first meeting was very representative of the various schools and methods of teaching. Genée represented the Danish school, Karsavina, the Russian school, Cormani, the Italian, Espinosa, the French, and Phyllis Bedells, who, having been trained in all four methods, was able to appreciate the best points in each system. Their first task was to work out what they considered to be the most effective syllabus for elementary work.

The growth of the RAD

Since then she has watched it grow from strength to strength. "Its aims," she says in her autobiography, "have always been my own and its work was, and is still, near to my heart."

To those who deride the organisation she replies that its syllabuses are more elastic and thorough than most critics believe, and that they have been compiled with more thought and care than they are often given credit for. Now its training syllabuses are closely linked with the requirements of the Sadler's Wells companies. Those responsible for the preparation of the academic details and the technical *enchaînements* which go to make up syllabuses are only too aware of the dangers of losing touch with the practical needs of the stage. However, they have been fortunate in having been able to draw upon Ninette de Valois's and Tamara Karsavina's vast amount of knowledge and experience of stage training.

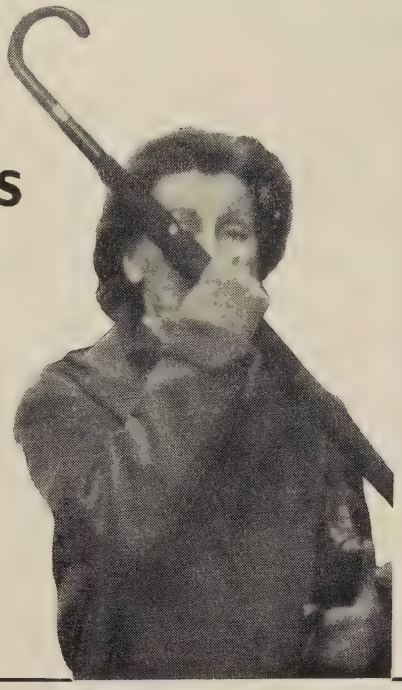
To the anti-examites she replies that an R.A.D. exam. does not claim to do any more than state that a successful pupil has passed a particular syllabus satisfactorily. Moreover, the Advanced Teacher's Certificate is a particularly exacting course, and is now so thorough that it is almost impossible for a mediocre teacher to pass through the net. It is only available to members who are over the age of 23 and who have had at least three years' teaching experience in a responsible position. They must also satisfy their examiners that they have a thorough knowledge and understanding of all the R.A.D. work from a teacher's angle.

In 1934 Phyllis Bedells opened her well-known studio in Quex Road, and now she can say that she has had the honour of teaching most of our best-known ballerinas. Margot Fonteyn, Mona Inglesby, Pamela May and Moira Shearer have all taken private lessons with her, while some of her past pupils have been Claude Newman, Annabel Farjeon, Felicity Gray, Stella Farrance, Laurel Martyn, Jennifer Gay, Elizabeth Kennedy, Angela Bayley, Winifred Edwards and Anna Carne.

Pupils at her school mainly work for the R.A.D. examinations. Enrolment for examinations is not compulsory, although she has found that most pupils always want to study for them eventually. Though she is only too ready to concede from her experience that examinations can become the master of the pupil (and even the teacher!) and not the servant, she believes that, as they are no more than a means to an end, taken with intelligence they can be a good stepping-stone. As students enrol some months before the exams are held, their approach is usually a spur to work more attentively. At her school pupils are advised to be patient and acquire firm roots before attempting an examination, so that they will not give a performance which will be an insult to their examiners. (*continued on page 42*)

My Meetings With Garbo

by Simon Fleet



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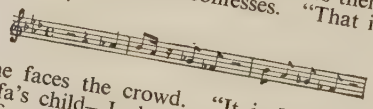
THE villagers immediately assume that it is Jenufa who has done away with her child, and threaten her. Latsa tries to defend her, when suddenly Kostelnichka silences them all. Slowly, painfully, she confesses. "That is my deed. . . ."



She faces the crowd. "It is I who killed Jenufa's child—I alone—it was impossible to sacrifice two lives for that of the child. . . ." To the horrified villagers she tells the whole story—Steva's betrayal, Jenufa's tragedy, her own despair and evil.

Jenufa approaches her tenderly, realising that love has turned this proud woman into what she has become. Kostelnichka sinks to her knees. She knows what the worldly punishment will be, but she needs something more. "Only forgive me, now I draw strength from you. . . .".

SYLVIA FISHER
and
AMY SHUARD
in JENUFA

Photo
DEREK ALLEN

FLIRTATIOUS GIPSY: Antonio, as a gipsy, attracts his cousins' sweethearts on the way to Seville. The opening moments of By the Guadalquivir.

THREATENING COUSINS: The girls' sweethearts—Joaquin Robles, Antonio de Ronda, Pepe Soler and Paco Ruiz—become jealous.

ANTONIO AND HIS SPANISH BALLET

New works in second programme

MOST companies put everything they have into their opening programme. It was therefore a very pleasant surprise to find that Antonio's second programme at the Palace Theatre was every bit as good as his first. It contained a new ballet, *By the Guadalquivir*, which showed his growing maturity as a choreographer, even if it also showed a few faults.

Inspired by poems of Garcia Lorca and to the accompaniment of two guitars, it tells of the fate of a handsome gipsy boy who flirts with the girl friends of his male cousins. He is falsely accused and thrown into jail where he has a vision of blood. He escapes only to meet death at the hands of his cousins who are repentant when they see angels mourning over his dead body. I, too, was upset by this spectacle as the angels were put up on full-point.

Apart from this unfortunate lapse, Antonio's choreography used the Spanish idiom stylised into dramatic form. It was more serious than anything he has done before and he will, no doubt, polish the work up before bringing it to London again.

A revival of his *Suite of Basque Dances* and his *The Disdainful Segovian* made up the bulk of the remainder of the programme. Both have been tightened up since last seen here and greatly improved.

Rosita Segovia was excellent in the latter work. She managed to be gauche and charming at the same time. But in everything she did she showed a great sense of style. No longer does she appear to be a guest artist from another dance world; she has become part and parcel of this company.

Carmen Rojas was at her best in the flamenco *Taranto*. She is a little firebrand who when she raises her arms becomes a queen on the night.

Needless to say, Antonio galvanises the company, and audience, into action whenever he appears. But the great feature of his programmes now is that they don't start to sag whenever he is off stage. Amongst the male dancers in particular there seems to be some splendid material for the future. **P.W.**

FALSE ACCUSATION: Antonio, as the gipsy, is falsely accused by his cousins and arrested.

VISION OF BLOOD: Antonio, with the corps de ballet *as a fountain of blood, has a premonition of death.* *Photos: Duncan Melvin*

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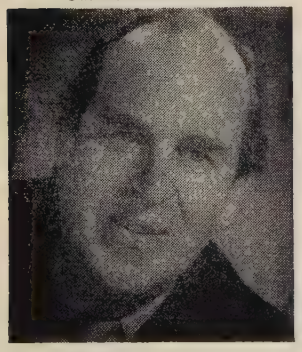

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LIFE IN OLD MADRID: Luisillo's Spanish Dance Theatre company in Pregones Madrilenos. *This was one of the excellent numbers given by the company during their Princes Theatre season. Through songs and dances it shows the daily life in a typical courtyard in Madrid during the last century. The season will be reviewed in full next month.* *Photo: Hugh Doran*

DANCE LECTURES

Mimika Martaki Shepherd on *The Development of Dance in Greece.*

Presented by the Federation of Russian and Classical Ballet at St. Luke's Hall, Chelsea.

MIMIKA SHEPHERD, who was born in Greece, trained as a dancer and worked professionally at the Lyric Theatre, Athens. Before coming to this country in 1945 she made an extensive study of the folk-dances of Greece, and she has now trained a group of dancers who demonstrated the dances she discussed.

She gave a brief outline of the historical background of the golden age of Greece in order to establish the fact that her country has a very old dance tradition. However far we go back into Greek history through art and literature we are constantly aware of the presence of dance. Something has been rediscovered of the ancient dances by analysing friezes of dancers in vase paintings. For example, there are cases of the picture of an actual step repeating itself for the length of time it takes to perform the step, thereby giving us the rhythm.

The old rhythms have persisted to this day and are still the characteristic rhythm of today's dances. Although various outside influences can be traced in the folk-dances—Byzantine, Turkish, Genoese, Venetian and Slav—and almost every town or island has its own local dress and individual dances, for simplification she classified them into three groups. These are those of military origin, those which are harmonious and gentle in style and feeling, and comedy dances.

The traditional dance is now the *Kalamatianós*. It is a descendant of a descriptive military dance, still retaining a movement which was once a downward and forward thrust of a sword, after which the dancer recoiled as if struck on the brow. Most of the dances demonstrated were in circular pattern, with the dancers in profile with hands placed on each other's shoulders, or chain dances with the dancers linking hands. The latter are believed to represent the prisoners who linked hands so that they would not lose their way when Theseus led them from the labyrinth of the Minotaur. Two of the most interesting dances were a Macedonian dance and the *Pendozali*, a Cretan dance.

Mimika Shepherd herself led the dancers very gracefully and effectively, and with more *épaulement* than is usual in such a demonstration. However, the lecture would have been a great deal clearer if each dance discussed had been demonstrated immediately after its points had been considered—rather than having all of them given in a group to round off the afternoon. Consequently, when each was eventually given, it was difficult to detect which it could have been in the discussion. It must be added that Mrs. Shepherd took part in the dances, and that the dancers themselves relied very heavily on her lead.

E. C. Mason

Dance and Dancers . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET

"BALANCHINE has always been aware that he was working in a new country with different methods of expression and that that called for another style," states the programme for the New York City Ballet's performances at the Paris Opéra on October 17, 19, 20 and 21. Once again, on its fourth European tour, this American Company eloquently demonstrates its autonomy. Balanchine's aesthetic is no doubt faithfully expressed, since the bill features almost exclusively works by him—two ballets by Robbins are the only exceptions—interpreted by dancers modelled according to his desire. As well as works seen before, three novelties were presented, *Allegro brillante*, *Pas de Dix* and *Divertissement No.* 15, all three pure dance denuded of theme or emotional extensions such as the choreographer likes.

What impression do we come away with? One of a dazzling lesson of mastery and coldness. With a dry scholarship Balanchine has transformed his dancers into a cluster of lines; unfortunately he accelerates the tempo more and more and at times brings virtuosity near to gesticulation. Steps follow one another in a tremulous rhythm and end by being only sketched, which is unfortunate since it reduces markedly the content of lyricism. The *danseuses*, who in the main possess an excellent bearing and unusual assurance and discipline, are astonishingly quick but give too little thought to their arms, which tend to be angular, and to expression, which is the poetry of the dance. The audience is conquered but not charmed. More *andante* and less *allegrettissimo is needed.*

Divertissement No. 15 appears to have little of the spirit of Mozart, although each bar is precisely transcribed with Balanchine's well-known facility. The *Allegro* introduces the whole cast; the *Theme and Variations* movement contains variations for the principals, the *Minuet* is danced by the *corps de ballet*, the *Andante* is a *pas de deux* for the stars, and in the finale appear the whole cast. Although some passages are very beautiful, the work suffers from excessive speed. Melissa Hayden and Diana Adams distinguish themselves, as does Allegra Kent, a promising newcomer. The lack of style in the male dancing is particularly strongly felt in a work of this kind.

Pas de Dix, arranged for Maria Tallchief to the *Pas Hongrois* from Glazunov's *Raymonda* and performed in Paris by Patricia Wilde, presents an interesting synthesis of the classical dance and the spirit of folklore. The transposition is discreet but confers on the divertissement some colour and a certain warmth. André Eglevsky, the only *danseur noble* in the company, seems to be in less good form than before. His celebrated *ballon* no longer suffices to conceal a relative weakness in his carriage or the awkwardness of his hands.

Western Symphony is still the most interesting of the more recent creations. Already seen in Paris last year, it gives the company the opportunity of displaying its dynamic precision and in particular brings out the astonishing stage presence of Tanaquil LeClercq and the exuberance of Jacques d'Amboise. While it is a pleasure to see again *Four Temperaments*, one of Balanchine's best works, it is a pity that Jerome Robbins is represented only by two very well-known works, *Fanfare* and *The Pied Piper*, and not

by *The Concert*, and that Paris has not had the opportunity of appreciating *The Still Point* by Todd Bolender, who gives a pleasing performance in *Fanfare*.

The orchestral playing was excellent under the direction of Leon Barzin, and the music was well chosen. As before, sets and costumes are as simple as possible, symbolic rather than decorative, in accordance with George Balanchine's strict requirements.

Marie-Françoise Christout

THE PARIS OPERA

ON the threshold of winter, M. Georges Hirsch, Administrator of the National Lyric Theatres, has made known his plans and decisions, notably so far as concerns the composition of the ballet company. While the announcement of the engagement of Marjorie Tallchief and George Skibine affords some interest, one can only deplore most deeply the apparently inexplicable departure of Nina Vyroubova. Creator of important and varied rôles in such ballets as *The Firebird*, *Les Noces Fantastiques* and *Fourberies*, this ballerina had also given very personal interpretations in *Giselle*, *Phèdre* and *Les Mirages*. It is to be hoped, in the interests of the Opéra and French ballet generally, that her absence will be of short duration.

As well as Nina Vyroubova, Micheline Bardin is leaving the Opéra, as is also Youly Algaroff, who will appear as a guest artist. Lycette Darsonval, who is at present on an extended tour of the USA and Canada with her own company, will on her return take over the vacant position as head of the École de Danse, formerly held by Albert Aveline and more recently by Harald Lander.

Revoking his first decision, Serge Lifar will not, after all, be leaving the company whose glory he has largely built up. He is to arrange the choreography of *Le Martyre de Saint-Sebastien*, and revive *Passion*, for Daydé, Renault and Algaroff, and *Le Chevalier et la Demoiselle*. The revival of *Scheherazade* has also been announced, as has the first production at the Opéra of Leonide Massine's *Symphonie Fantastique* and George Balanchine's *Casse-Noisette*.

Peter Van Dijk has taken over Michel Renault's rôle in *Soir de Fête* with Christiane Vaussard whose rôle in this ballet is among her best. Peter Van Dijk has in turn assimilated the recent Russian lesson of lifts at the full stretch of the arm, which seem to have entered definitely into the French choreographic vocabulary.

LOLA FLORES

On October 5, Lola Flores and her Spanish Company appeared at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. Endowed with a generous and exuberant temperament, Lola Flores appears more as a singer miming effectively with the subtle play of hands, than as a dancer. Her programme, therefore, dominated by her volcanic personality, gives an important place to singing. It is regrettable that the meaning of the songs is not explained in the programme and that one has to applaud blindly *La Sebastiana*, *La Zarzamora* and *Angelitos negros*, pungent masterpieces all. Carmen Flores, finer and more delicate, has a charming presence and a sense of style.

Composed with no regard to folklore, this very Spanish spectacle aims only at pleasing. Boleros, ballads and flamenco dances follow one another in unpretentious succession. The small *corps de ballet* dances well under the directions of Paco Reyes. Faico represents the Andalusian style with *brio*, and Miguel Sandoval displays the distinction of the classical Spanish school. The rhythm of the show is quick, the costumes well chosen and often typically multicoloured. Unfortunately too deep a stage and too cold a theatre deprived the cast of the warm and direct contact they needed, and the overloud orchestra added to the barrier between the company and the public, despite the infectious *olés* from the Spaniards in the audience.

LA REVUE DES BALLETS DE PARIS

IT was naturally at the Théâtre de Paris that Roland Petit presented his *Revue des Ballets de Paris*. This is a revue in the proper sense of the term, that is a series of numbers, sketches in dance and song, and not a programme of ballet. This new formula is not uninteresting but is nonetheless very hybrid. Despite its rapid rhythm, the show lacks cohesion and balance, even after the revisions necessitated by the deletion of *La Nuit*, a song by Leo Ferre with a set by André Beaurepaire.

The whole show rests on Zizi Jeanmaire whose extraordinary presence alone would hold one's interest. A real creature of the theatre, she appears in a new guise, sparkling with wit and comedy, delighting in singing and acting, yet she still remains in one's memory as a dancer with a pure, precise line.

The curtain rises on *Paris l'accroche'-coeur*, a short scene without much character with a set by Toni Keogh which enables Jeanmaire in black tights and transparent mackintosh to make her first appearance as a street-singer. *La Fille aux yeux secs* which follows, recounts, almost in the manner of pantomime, the confused history of a young girl who cannot weep. Sondra Lee and Serge Perrault have hardly time to be appreciated and quickly give place to Jeanmaire, who sings *Tatouges*, then to Roland Petit turned into a *Drummer*. Assisted by Rino Adipietro and Don Lirio, the young Sondra Lee gives free rein to her verve in *Vignettes*, a series of sketches which approach the music hall in style.

Finally the dance comes into its own with *La Peur*. A fine set by Clavé conveys the atmosphere of anguish and mystery—crumbling walls, dark curtains gnawed by invisible teeth. Roland Petit climbs down a ladder into this strange haunt where he is spied on, as in a nightmare, "by the thing which crawls and waits and crouches in the shadows, which sees without eyes, which snaps, closes and presses in, and shrieks in silence." Zizi Jeanmaire personifies the cruel queen of the insect demons, a sort of ghoul, a blood-sucking vampire, though not the praying mantis of *The Cage* with which some have seen a resemblance. This very short work consists principally of an interesting *pas de deux*. The rest is only sketched in, which is a pity. Marius Constant's music is a little lacking in character.

After the quite needless appearance of the singer Souris come the final of *Les Belles Damnées* with Hélène Constantine and Rino Adipietor, and the Bedroom scene from *Carmen*, with Jeanmaire and Petit, the latter providing one of the better moments of the evening, which ended with *Valentine ou le velo magique*, a fairy operetta in 10 scenes with sets by André François, unfortunately prolonged by the reappearance of Souris. The theme is the Tour de France and the adventure of a little bicycle dealer who owns a flying cycle like the carpet of *The Arabian Nights*. Jeanmaire, in turn wearing overalls, the *maillot jaune* and evening dress, dominates a cast in which Serge Perrault distinguishes himself.

A finale *à la* Folies Bergère closes the show, which is a kind of cocktail made up of excellent ingredients, but with too little dance and too much singing and talking. The only ingredient which could have brought unity is music. Given the revue formula adopted by Roland Petit, someone of the class of Gershwin was needed. But Michel Legrand lacked sufficient stature, and his music was often vulgar. One regretted the art of Jean-Michel Damase in *La Croqueuse de Diamants*.

Marie-Françoise Christout

JUGOSLAV GISELLE: *Anton Dolin rehearsing Ana Roje and Myles Marsden as Giselle and Albrecht for a new production of* Giselle *in Split, Jugoslavia.*

Last September, Dolin gave up the best part of his holiday in order to rehearse the young company. The ballet will have its first performance in Split during January.

Dolin believes that in Marsden the world has a very promising male dancer of the future. Ana Roje has been a famous dancer for many years; today she directs a School of Ballet at Split.

NEWS IN BRIEF

IN the welcoming atmosphere of Gilberte Cournand's *La Danse*, Serge Lido signed copies of his sixth album of *Ballet*. He was surrounded by many dancers whose photographs figure in this magnificent work, notably Yvette Chauviré, Nina Vyroubova, Marjorie Tallchief, Serge Lifar, Michel Renault, George Skibine, Roland Petit, Jean Babilée, Milorad Miskovitch and René Bon.

NINA VYROUBOVA represented French ballet at the "Gala de la Nuit Française," organised on October 23 at Sao Paolo. With Youly Algaroff she danced in Lifar's *Romeo et Juliette* (Tchaikovsky) and extracts from *Le Lac des Cygnes*.

PILAR LOPEZ and her company opened a Paris season on October 16.

TATTOO: *René Jeanmaire and Rino Adipietro in a striptease number from Roland Petit's* Revue des Ballets de Paris. *Photo: Lido*

LA PEUR: *Jeanmaire, supported by Petit, in a ballet about a lady vampire which was one of the interesting numbers in the same revue. Photo: Lodi*

AMERICA

YUGOSLAV STATE COMPANY

BEFORE departing on their first transcontinental tour under the auspices of Sol Hurok, the Yugoslav State Company of folk dancers, known as Kolo, gave two performances at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Under the title of *Slavonic Rhapsody* this delightful group of dancers appeared in a programme of 19 numbers, all of which were under the artistic supervision of Olga Skovran.

Since this company has already been seen in London, it is quite unnecessary to review it at length here. However, it must be added that both the company and their programme received a remarkable reception from the New York press and public. Here, quite certainly, was some of the finest dancing of its kind that we have seen in many seasons. Throughout there was a remarkable inventiveness in movement, a wide range of subject matter and mood, handsome costumes and highly rhythmic and unusual music. Particularly noteworthy were some of the dances for the men, such as the *Warrior Dance from Rugovo*, the *Teshkoto* and the *Machkoto*. Also especially interesting was the frequent combination of song, music and dance in many of the numbers, providing a wonderful example of truly lyric theatre. Again, American dance audiences are in debt to Hurok for his newest dance importation.

MARTHA GRAHAM COMPANY

THREE capacity audiences, each containing many notables in the fields of the arts, including Dame Ninette de Valois at one of the showings, turned out to view the first public demonstration of the basic exercises of the Graham technique, as they were planned for the hour-long educational television film that has just been completed for showing over 12 key stations later this year.

In one of her rare rôles as narrator, Martha Graham introduced the two parts of the *Dances for Film* sections of the programme, terming these "a choreographed exhibition of class work, and gave a remarkably clear, concise explanation of this approach to dance. These compositions had a strong unity and a progressive flow of sequences that had a remarkably cumulative impact for so abstract a theme.

The second section of the programme consisted of the Sarabande from *Dark Meadow*, to music by Carlos Chavez, and the lyrical *Diversion of Angels*, to music by Norman Dello Joio. All of these works were danced magnificently by the following members of the Martha Graham Company: Yuriko, Helen McGehee, Ethel Winter, Mary Hinkson, Miriam Cole, Ellen Siegel, Robert Cohan, Stuart Hodes, Bertram Ross, David Wood and Gene McDonald.

These programmes were sponsored by the Rothschild Foundation for the Arts and Sciences. The studio, with its seating arrangements for approximately 125 people, proved highly suitable for this event and one hopes that the future possibilities for such dance evenings will not be overlooked in this set-up. Given the encouragement it so richly deserves, this centre might easily become as important a factor in today's dance field as did the pioneering Humphrey-Weidman Studio of a decade and a half ago. Though this would not replace a theatre, which is the proper framework for these dancers and the great dance works at their disposal, it would, most certainly, provide an area for the upswing which must and will take place for modern dance in America at this time.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

THE New York City Ballet, which has just returned from its most successful tour of Europe, opens its New York season this month with a two-week pre-Christmas season of performances of *The Nutcracker*, which has become an annual holiday event, especially for younger New York audiences. Immediately after Christmas, the New York City Ballet starts one of its longest New York seasons—ten weeks—during which time six new works will be premièred. One of these new works will be Gian-Carlo Menotti's new 40-minute musical work, *The Unicorn, the Gorgan and the Manticore*, which was commissioned by the Coolidge Foundation and given its first hearing in this foundation's twelfth festival of chamber music at the Library of Congress at Washington, D.C. Conceived in 17th-century madrigal form, this work calls for a chorus in the orchestra pit to sing the madrigals, and an ensemble of nine musical instruments, while the dancers tell the story on the stage. John Butler created the choreography for this Washington première but it is not yet definite whether he will repeat his assignment for the New York City Ballet's presentation of the work. At any event, this new lyric production appears to be one of the major highspots of the engagement.

BALLET AT THE MET

WITH Antony Tudor as Administrative Director, Mattlyn Gavers as ballet mistress and Zachary Solov as choreographer, considerable dance action may be expected during this season's programmes of the Metropolitan Opera. First of all, two new male soloists are announced. They are Geoffrey Holder, the exciting young Negro dancer from Trinidad, who will appear in *Aida* and *La Perichole*, and Pierre Lacotte, late of the Paris Opéra, who will partner Mary Ellen Moylan in Solov's *Soirée* as well as in the newly mounted dance that is being interpolated into the last act of *Ernani*. The following ten dancers have also been added to the *corps de ballet* this season: Nancy Benson, Anne Etgen, Edith Jerrell, Helena Petroff, Doris Wright, Tommy Andrew, Craig Crosson, Vittorio Korjhan, Bruce Marks and Steve Wiland.

DE VALOIS'S LECTURE TOUR

DAME NINETTE DE VALOIS arrived in America during late October to start her

lecture tour that is to take her across the United States and Canada. She made her first appearance (and it was a very gala occasion indeed) at the Library of Congress, in Washington, D.C. Though Dame Ninette's lecture at the New York City Town Hall was cancelled "due to a lack of interest on the part of New York lecture audiences," her appearances elsewhere here have all been made with capacity attendance. All of this brings up the question: do New Yorkers really want to learn about dance or are they merely content to watch it as entertainment?

NEWS IN BRIEF

GEORGE SKIBINE and Marjorie Tallchief have arrived in the United States to start rehearsals for their starring appearances with Ruth Page's Chicago Opera Ballet. This company embarked on a 17-week nation-wide tour on November 27. After the completion of this tour, Tallchief and Skibine return to Paris where they have been signed as principal dancers at the Opéra. . . . Dance-satirist Ivy Kitchell gave a series of five solo Broadway performances at the Bijou Theatre during mid-November. . . . Robert Joffrey is responsible for the choreography for the off-Broadway revival of Kurt Weill's *Johnny Johnson* while Danny Daniels is staging the dances for the new intimate revue, *Shoestring* '57. . . . John Cranko's long awaited revue, *Cranks*, featuring Annie Ross, Gilbert Vernon, Hugh Bryant and Kenneth Haigh, opens at the Bijou Theatre on November 28, too late for review in this issue. . . . The National Ballet of Canada is currently on an 18-week tour of Canada and the United States. Two ballets new to their repertoire this season are *La Llamada*, choreographed by Ray Moller, who is a member of the company, and Grant Strate's *The Fisherman and His Soul*, based on the story by Oscar Wilde. . . . James Mitchell who has been appearing with the New York City Opera Company, has taken over the central rôle of MacHeath in the long-running off-Broadway presentation of *The Threepenny Opera*.

Arthur Todd

So you want to Dance?

(*continued from page* 35)

Although Phyllis Bedells has judged a great many competitions, she makes it a rule never to enter her own students. Certain schools have built their reputations on the results of competitions, and pupils can, therefore, be exploited and overworked. Steady growth is forced, while too many cups or medals won may give the young dancer exaggerated ideas of her own importance. So much always depends on the actual arrangement of the competition solo, and not on a pupil's talent alone. They can also be the cause of much jealousy among both pupils and parents, although a sensible mother should be able to counteract most of the more harmful effects.

Strong or extreme as these views may sound to some, Phyllis Bedells is not entirely against competitions. She believes that one competition a year is not in any way harmful; in fact, it may help the child to develop her stage personality.

For many years she has had requests for lessons from teachers, and now an aspect of ballet on which she concentrates is the training of students to become teachers of ballet. "In addition," she says, "I am proud to be able to help other teachers by coaching their pupils; but I make it a rule of seeing that the students they bring or send to me for coaching never lose their loyalty to their original teacher. Professional etiquette is strictly enforced. In fact, I have become a sort of consultant in the ballet world."

In addition to the various classes in ballet technique, the following special classes are given: Cecchetti, character, national, stage, modern, *pas de deux* and ballroom, while Lydia Kyasht teaches mime, and Joan and Rudolf Benesh their system of dance notation. There are also classes for amateur children in the Ballet in Education Grades, quite separate from those for the carefully selected students who show ability as potential professionals. Pupils belonging to another school may not attend classes without their teacher's permission, but professionals may attend any ballet class without obligation.

Those who would like to learn more about Phyllis Bedells are recommended to read her charming autobiography, *My Dancing Days* (Phoenix House, 21*s*.).

COVER STORIES

This month's front cover, specially taken by Houston Rogers, is of Svetlana Beriosova in *The Prince of the Pagodas*, the new ballet by John Cranko for the Sadler's Wells Ballet. It has its world première at Covent Garden on January 1.

BERIOSOVA was born in Kaunas, Lithuania. At the age of two she toured with her father Nicholas Beriosoff (now ballet master of Festival Ballet) who was a soloist with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. In 1947, she came to England to join Metropolitan Ballet and immediately became its ballerina. When the company disbanded in 1949, she joined Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and toured America with the company as joint ballerina with Elaine Fifield. At the end of 1952, she moved to the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden where she has remained, gradually taking over all the important classical rôles as well as having new rôles created for her, notably in Cranko's *The Shadow* and Ashton's *Rinaldo and Armida*. In the past few years, Beriosova has taken over all the principal rôles in the full-length classics.

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Nov.
21 *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
24 (M) *Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
24 (E) *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
27 *Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)

Dec.
1 (M) *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
5 *Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes)
8 (M) *Sylvia* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
8 (E) *Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes)
12 *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)

Programmes from December 21 to be announced. Cranko's *The Prince of the Pagodas* has its world première on Jan. 1.

FESTIVAL BALLET
Tour

Nov.
19 Olympia Theatre, Dublin
26 Grand Opera House, Belfast

Dec.
3 Empire Theatre, Newcastle

at the Stoll Theatre, London

Dec.
19, 20 *Coppelia*
21–29 *Swan Lake* Act II, *The Nutcracker*
31–Jan. 2 *Coppelia*

Jan.
3, 4 *The Nutcracker, Etudes*
5 (M) *Swan Lake* Act II, *The Nutcracker*
5, 7, 8 *The Nutcracker, Etudes*
9 (M) *Swan Lake* Act II, *The Nutcracker*
10–16 *Coppelia*
17, 18 *The Nutcracker, Etudes*
19 (M) *Swan Lake* Act II, *The Nutcracker*
19 (E) *The Nutcracker, Etudes*

Evenings (Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.), 7.30 p.m. Wed. and Sat. at 8 p.m. Mats.: Wed. and Sat., 5.15 p.m.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

Nov.
19 Globe, Stockton-on-Tees
16 New Theatre, Hull

Dec.
3 Theatre Royal, Nottingham

BALLET RAMBERT

Nov.
26 (for 3 weeks) Scottish Arts Council Tour

ANTONIO AND HIS SPANISH BALLET

Nov.
19 Davis Theatre, Croydon
26 The Gaumont Theatre, Bradford

Dec.
3 The State Theatre, Kilburn

JOSE GRECO AND HIS SPANISH BALLET
at the Royal Festival Hall London
Dec. 24 for 3 weeks
Tour

Nov.
19 The Kings Theatre, Edinburgh
26 Theatre Royal, Newcastle

Dec.
3 The Hippodrome, Bristol
10 The Royal Court, Liverpool

WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS, at the London Coliseum
Dec. 20 for 3 weeks (mats. only)

Christmas play with ALICIA MARKOVA in a new ballet by Keith Lester. ANTON DOLIN as St. George.

ANNA PAVLOVA COMMEMORATIVE EXHIBITION
at the London Museum
Sept. 4 to Dec. 31

Ballet Correspondents

(Abbreviations: b.c.—ballet correspondence; m.—male; f.—female; m.a.—my age; o.i.—other interests; l.s.—languages; p.r.—photograph requested).

MARGARET DAVIES, 309 Ansty Road, Coventry, Warwicks., wants b.c., m. or f., age 30–36. m.a. 34. s.i.: reading plays. o.i.: music, photography. p.r., all answered.

LESLEY BARRON, 146 North St., Timaru, New Zealand, wants b.c. f., aged 12-14, in Spain or USA, especially Los Angeles. m.a. 13. o.i. films, picture exchanging, Spanish dance.

MEREDITH SURRIDGE, 23 Balmoral Avenue, Murray Park, Sth. Australia, wants b.c., m. or f. between ages 16–21. m.a. 17. o.i. photography, opera. All answered.

SHIRLEY SMITH, 24 Albany Road, Abington, Northampton, wants b.c., f., age 20, in Vienna, Italy, Spain. m.a. 20. o.i.: opera, music, drama, travel, art, horses. Ls. French, German, some Italian.

NEXT MONTH

LOOK FOR

BELINDA WRIGHT

in Festival Ballet's *Coppelia* on the front cover of the January DANCE AND DANCERS.

INSIDE THE PERSONALITY OF ULANOVA by NINA LATTA, Ulanova's interpreter in London. ANTON DOLIN compares the Russian dancers of the Diaghilev Ballet with those of the Bolshoi. EVAN SENIOR compares the productions differences of the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow and London. PEGGY VAN PRAAGH on her world tour mounting Sadler's Wells ballets. The London season of LUISILLO with pictures specially taken by ROY ROUND. More pages from the scrapbook of PHYLLIS BEDELLS. New full-page pictures of MARKOVA and JOSE GRECO. All the usual features and many topical ones.

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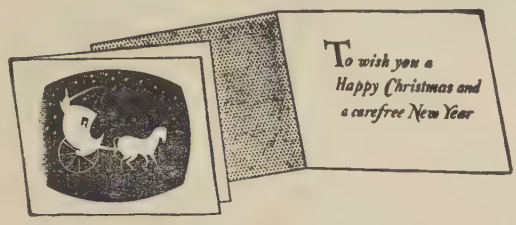

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